THE SHAKERITE

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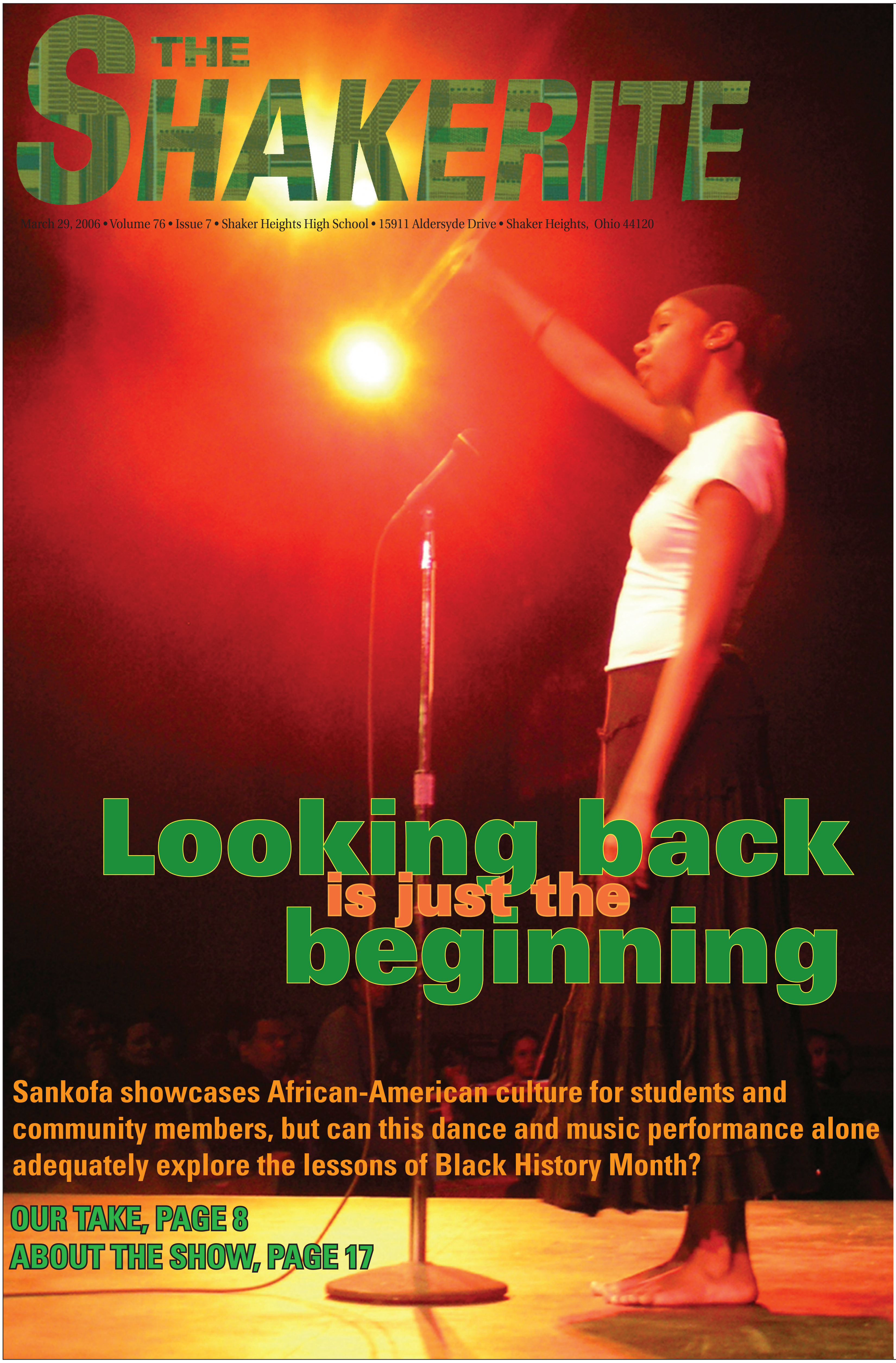


Looking back is just the beginning

Sankofa showcases African-American culture for students and community members, but can this dance and music performance alone adequately explore the lessons of Black History Month?

OUR TAKE, PAGE 8
ABOUT THE SHOW, PAGE 17

ON THE FAST TRACK

12 STUDENTS AND FOUR TEACHERS WORK TO FIT TWO YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL INTO ONE. HOW ARE THEY DOING IT AND WHY?

PAGE 6

SHAKER HEIGHTS
SHAKER HEIGHTS
SHAKER HEIGHTS
Abby
Steve
Ann
HIGH SPINS TEAM

GLIDING ALONG

SHAKER ICE SKATERS PARTICIPATED IN THE OHIO HIGH SCHOOL COMPETITION AND WERE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR MANEUVERS AND SPINS. SEE IF YOU COULD HANDLE THEIR SCHEDULES!

PAGE 23

DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER!

ATTENTION 18-YEAR-OLDS: TO VOTE IN MAY, YOU MUST REGISTER BY APRIL 3. GET THE FORM AT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OR FROM ANY GOVERNMENT TEACHER. IF YOU'LL BE 18 BY NOVEMBER, MAKE SURE YOU REGISTER NOW!

COVER PHOTO

Senior Makeda Farley recites an original poem at this year's Sankofa performance. The annual celebration of Black History Month included dancing, a slide show and several skits written and performed by students and their advisers. Sankofa means to take something from the past and incorporate it into the present to better the future. Farley's monologue discussed past and present challenges to the African-American community. Photo by Dan Snider.

What's Inside

03.29.06

EDITORS' NOTE

A modest proposal

With apologies to Jonathan Swift.

The halls are crowded, the stairways packed and the human traffic jam that precedes fourth period only seems to be getting worse. As seniors we've trained for four years to master the art of the peripheral track and duck move (in which you notice out of the corner of your eye that a 6-foot freshman is about to elbow you in the face so you make like King Tut and duck to the left). But we're concerned for the rest of you.

AVIVA ARIEL

To correct the ever-increasing confusion and chaos of our high school's hallways, we have developed a modest proposal. By identifying the problem -- those students who are unable to move about the halls in an efficient and appropriate manner -- we have determined who is at fault and have devised a rehabilitation program.

Certain people who do not demonstrate they are capable of walking in the hall shall be confined to one room for the entire day, where they will practice walking back and forth, back and forth.

EMILY GRANNIS

For students whose appendages and exuberant personalities permeate the hallways and physically harm others, straightjackets will be employed.

For others who have trouble persisting in walking, varying degrees of backpack weight will be used as punishment. If one such student stopped for a 30-second chat at a locker, they may only need to carry a copy of the Rules and Responsibilities Handbook.

However, for making an entire floor late to class or slowing down activity more severely than teachers on the server during progress report time, the student would be made to carry several copies of the Anthology of Literature, the 1,430 page book that plagues students in and out of the classroom.

All teachers on their free periods will be required to help supervise these students and administer the program, because this is a community problem and, according to Principal Michael Griffith, "We are a school community, and therefore any behavior that affects anyone in the community affects us all."

Though some administrators might foolishly suggest creating a traffic flow by enhancing our floors with dotted yellow lines to mimic a two-lane road, or by daring to hire enough security guards to oversee the throngs of students, their solutions are obviously untenable. Ours, on the other hand, is not only clear but practical.

We profess, in the sincerity of our hearts, that we have not the least personal interest in endeavoring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the public good of our school, by advancing our traffic flow, providing for our fellow students, relieving the security guards and giving some movement to the second-floor hallway.

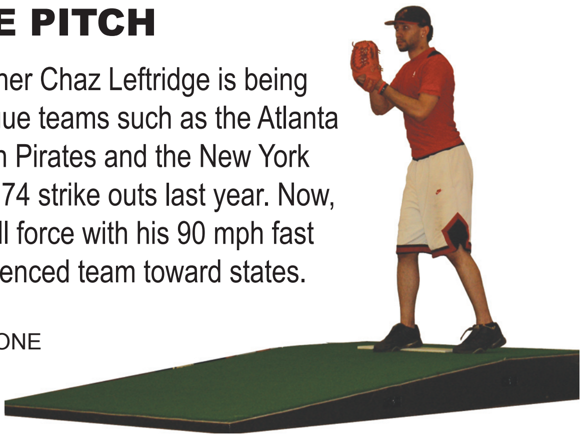
We unfortunately cannot hope to benefit from this plan; this is our last year – we'll be gone in two months.

A not-so-sweet change

Forget the candy, bring on the fruit! As of next year, candy sales are banned as fund raisers for clubs. The decision is based on more than just health concerns; administrators hope to end sales made by students not affiliated with extracurricular activities. Check whether or not you'll be legal with that package of M&M's.

PAGE 19, THE BEAT

MAKING THE PITCH



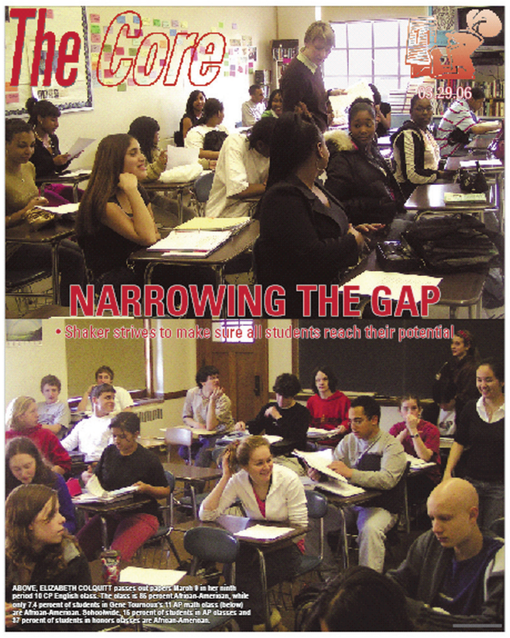
Four-year varsity pitcher Chaz Leftridge is being courted by major league teams such as the Atlanta Braves, the Pittsburgh Pirates and the New York Yankees. He rang up 74 strike outs last year. Now, Leftridge is back in full force with his 90 mph fast ball to lead the experienced team toward states.

PAGE 24, RAIDER ZONE

A SPELL-BINDING JOB

Michelle Federer ('91) started in Shaker theater and worked up to Broadway. She starred in the Tony Award-winning musical "Wicked" before becoming Julia Roberts' understudy in "Three Days of Rain." Find out what an actor's life is really like.

PAGE 15, LIMELIGHT



The Core
03.29.06
NARROWING THE GAP
• Shaker strives to make sure all students reach their potential

ABOVE, ELIZABETH COLQUITT passes out papers March 8 in her ninth period 10 CP English class. The class is 86 percent African-American, while only 7.4 percent of students in Gene Tournoux's 11 AP math class (below) are African-American. Schoolwide, 16 percent of students in AP classes and 37 percent of students in honors classes are African-American.

NO EASY ANSWERS FOR ACHIEVEMENT QUESTION

The district is in a steady fight to reduce the size of the achievement gap, which includes the disproportionately low representation of African-American students in honors and Advanced Placement classes. As part of its push, the district has piloted a number of programs to reach out to students who are not performing at their potential.

PAGE 11, THE CORE

SHAKERITE
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NSPA

This Month

03.29.06

TURN OFF THE TUBE

The last week in April is TV-Turn-Off Week. Celebrating is easy -- challenge yourself to go all week without watching TV. Instead, the TV-Turnoff Network suggests that you think, read and connect with your family and friends. The network aims to empower people to take control of technology so that technology does not take control of them. They believe that TV-free days will produce healthier lifestyles. They also promise that the TV-less week might be easier than you expect, and could be a very "rewarding and fulfilling" experience.

HISTORY OF THE LUNCHBOX STAPLE

The peanut butter and jelly sandwich is a staple of students' lunchboxes, whether they are in kindergarten or twelfth grade. But this American take on the sandwich is a relatively recent phenomenon. The sandwich itself came to be in 1762 as a snack food for the Fourth Earl of Sandwich when he went gambling in London. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a series of events occurred that set the stage for the dynamic clash of peanut butter and jelly between two pieces of bread. Firstly in 1890, peanut butter was invented by a doctor as an easy-to-digest, high protein food. Then in 1927, the genius bread-slicer was invented and pre-sliced bread became a huge success. Lastly, in 1940, the Food and Drug Administration established standards for jelly production and the spreadable condiment continued to grow popular. Yet something was needed to set these three ingredients into harmonious action. American WWII soldiers, who mixed their rations of peanut butter with jelly, pulled the trigger. Upon their return to the United States, peanut butter and jelly sales skyrocketed, and the sandwich has been a favorite ever since.

THE SCOOP ON PB&J

by the #'s

1,500

PB&J sandwiches will be consumed by an average American by the time they graduate high school.

73

percent of adult males cut their PB&J sandwiches, while 60 percent of women take a knife to theirs.

40

percent of parents cut their kids' PB&J sandwiches diagonally, while 31 percent cut them horizontally. The rest pamper their children with fun cut-out shapes.

62

percent of adults use white bread, 27 percent use wheat and 11 percent use multi-grain or other types of bread for their PB&J.

403

calories are in an average PB&J sandwich, along with 18 grams of fat and 58 grams of carbohydrates.

150

pounds of peanut butter and 50 pounds of jelly were used to make the world's largest PB&J sandwich, measuring almost 40 feet long.

April

KEY

M - Men
W - Women
BB - Baseball
TN - Tennis
SB - Softball (played at Lomond)
LAX - Lacrosse (played at Woodbury)

*All listed games are at home

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 April Fool's Day SAT 7:45 a.m. - 1 p.m. M JV LAX Archbishop Hoban 3 p.m. Samantha Miller turns 18
2 National Peanut Butter and Jelly Day	3 W V/JV LAX Medina 4:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. V/JV BB Benedictine 4:15 p.m. Melissa Nezamzadeh turns 17	4 SB Mayfield 4:30 p.m. Simone Duval turns 15	5	6	7 IX Indoor Amusement Park thru 4/30 $18 JV TN Mayfield 4 p.m. W 9th grade LAX Walsh Jesuit 4:30 p.m. V BB Warrensville 4:15 p.m.	8 ACT 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. M V/JV LAX Hawken 12 p.m./2 p.m. V BB Euclid 12 p.m. Spring Fling 8 p.m.
9	10 SPRING BREAK	11 SPRING BREAK JV TN Brush 4 p.m. Meagan Crowley turns 18	12 SPRING BREAK JV TN University School 4 p.m. JV BB Admiral King 4:15 p.m.	13 SPRING BREAK Peach Cobbler Day JV TN Admiral King 4 p.m. V TN Admiral King 4 p.m.	14 SPRING BREAK JV TN St. Ignatius 4 p.m. Meghana Karnik turns 17	15 V TN St. Ignatius 4 p.m.
16 Easter Sunday	17 JV BB Lakewood 4:15 p.m. SB Lakewood 4:15 p.m. Band Senior Recognition Banquet 7 p.m.	18 V TN Southview H 4 p.m. M V LAX Uniontown 5:30 p.m. W 9th grade LAX Jackson 4:30 BOE Meeting 8 p.m.	19 Early Dismissal JV BB Cleveland Hts. 4:15 p.m. SB Cleveland Hts. 4:15 p.m.	20 National High Five Day W V/JV/9th grade LAX Hudson 4:30 p.m/6 p.m.	21 JV TN Firestone 4 p.m. V BB Shaw 4:30 p.m. Spring Concert in Dance 8 p.m. - 10 p.m. thru 4/22	22 Jelly Bean Day JV TN Lakeside 4 p.m. V TN Lakeside 4 p.m. Crew at Westerville Ska Prom
23 JV TN Raider JV Doubles	24 Emily McCandless turns 15	25 V TN Cleveland Hts. 4 p.m.	26 Pretzel Day M/W TR Cleveland Hts. 4 p.m. JV BB Euclid 4:15 p.m. SB Euclid 4:15 p.m. Orchestra Concert 7:30 p.m.	27 V TN Mentor 4 p.m. W V/JV LAX Magnificat 4:30 p.m./6 p.m. JV BB Southview 4:15 p.m. SB Southview 4:15 p.m. Spring Theater Ensemble Show 8 p.m. thru 4/29	28 Asian Art Fair Spirit Breakfast 7:15 a.m. V/JV TN Walsh 4 p.m. W V LAX Cleveland Hts. 5 p.m. JV BB Maple Hts. 4:15 p.m. SB Maple Hts. 4:15 p.m.	29 Zipper Day 30

HOLIDAY FOR THE HIGH FIVE

What started as the silly, late-night idea of a few juniors at the University of Virginia four years ago, is now becoming a nationally celebrated holiday. All over the country on the third Thursday of April, people are embracing the high five. The founders of National High Five Day have high hopes for the holiday. Their flyers state that the holiday seeks to promote unity by "encouraging, respecting and appreciating the high five." They also offer some tips for achieving the best high five so that participants can get the most out of the experience. Palms should engage firmly and soundly in the air, and participants should then continue nonchalantly to their destination while listening to the resonating clap of the high five. Check out their website, www.nationalhighfiveday.com.

YOU'VE BEEN FOOLED

Although the origins of April Fool's day are disputed, millions of people around the world stage April Fool's Day pranks each year. In April 1998, Burger King published a full-page advertisement in USA Today announcing their new "Left-Handed Whopper," designed for the 32 million left-handed Americans. After thousands of requests, Burger King revealed it was a hoax. In 2003, a Tennessee radio station announced that Eminem would be doing a free show in a discount store parking lot. So many people arrived for the concert that the police were required to deal with the traffic jam, and the DJs were jailed for creating a nuisance. The Shakerite pulled a similar prank when it published the "Shakerwrong" in 2002. It included an ad for a Britney Spears concert at Russell H. Rupp Field; a young fan came to The Shakerite office to ask where he could purchase tickets. However, The Shakerite editors were not arrested.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF PROM

Prom. Dropping $500-plus to get a limo, throwing on a one night rent-a-tux, getting hammered and ending up in some random hotel. This is different. On Saturday April 22, Ska Prom 2006 comes to the Cleveland Agora. This annual event features some very suave skasters dancing away to upbeat, uptempo, horn-filled fun. The event features forefathers of today's Ska Scene -- Mustard Plug, from Grand Rapids, MI -- in addition to Cleveland's own, The Skatastrophes, 80Hd and the Set-Ups. The party doesn't stop just with music. There are professional photographers, tons of balloons and even a Ska Prom King and Queen. And if that doesn't cut it, you should go just to see people in checkerboard duct tape suits.

Compiled by Allison Scharfstein

THORNTON PARK REVEALS PLANS FOR RENOVATION

All the possible plans for Thornton Park were revealed Feb. 15. In addition to the pool, plans included other amenities such as basketball and skateboarding facilities. All plans for the park featured a greener and more accessible facility. As promised by Mayor Judy Rawson, all plans included 50-meter lap lanes in the pool. The city hopes the new renovation will draw more customers to the recreation center.

> "I think they should put stores that appeal more to teens, or more places to eat that are more affordable."
>
> Liz Kim • junior

> "Maybe they should add popular clothing stores . . . I liked it when Bath and Body Works was there . . . and good food places."
>
> Libby Kannard • junior

Bobby O'Connor • The Shakerite

VAN AKEN CONSTRUCTION can be seen already, however, a new plan is in the works to completely renovate and update the Van Aken area. Although this plan is not solid, it will soon be finalized by city officials.

RENOVATIONS VS. HISTORY

BY CARRIE REESE
NOTEWORTHY EDITOR

When Office Max decided to move its headquarters to Chicago in August 2005, the company made what has always been a weak commercial tax base even weaker.

Mayor Judy Rawson said the move cost Shaker between $600,000 and $700,000 a year in tax revenues. However, Urban Design Associates intend to redevelop the Van Aken Center retail area over the next five to 10 years, which could replace some lost tax revenue.

Despite the additional revenue, some worry the project could cost Shaker part of its historical charm.

"I think it would make Shaker too industrial and too retail if we put in malls," junior Jessica Craig said. "It would lose part of its history."

The move toward this renovation of Van Aken Center began with the closing last year of Draeger's, a family-owned ice cream and candy store. Newman Outfitters, an outdoor sports and camping store, also went out of business to make space for a new Walgreen's drug store.

The loss of the local ice cream shop did not sit well with the community.

"The last thing we need in Shaker is another drugstore or pharmacy," Marianne Schwartz said in the March 2005 edition of The Shakerite. Schwartz grew up in Shaker and later taught at the high school.

Shaker lacks the business base necessary to generate tax money to help pay for city services and education. A Van Aken renovation would add revenue because the current businesses don't attract many customers.

"I don't go there much at all. There are no stores that are very appealing to me. Sometimes I go to eat at Sand's Café, but not very much," junior Liz Kim said.

To prevent Shaker from becoming too commercial and to address fears that the city will lose its character, city leaders are looking for residents' ideas.

"This process will include public meetings and outreach where we seek resident's input," said Patrick Campbell, Shaker's director of economic development.

BRIEFS

BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Public comment enlivened the March 14 Board of Education meeting. After the board hurried to approve standard motions, they took what they hoped would be brief comments from two audience members before convening an executive session to discuss collective bargaining with their attorney.
- First to speak was resident Dan Hoffman regarding merit pay options for teachers. Hoffman suggested using money from private donations. "Paying the same thing for bad and mediocre teachers as for good teachers is not putting us on track for excellence," he said. Hoffman asked the board to consider having the teachers devise criteria for receiving merit pay and claimed "it is slanderous to the teaching profession" to assume teachers cannot find a way to evaluate themselves.
- Following Hoffman's statements, Shaker parent Henry Schoenberger addressed the board about high school climate issues. He discussed what he termed the ineffectiveness of SGORR and the need for more obvious consequences for negative behavior in the high school. "Shaker Heights doesn't want to call attention to the ghetto aspect of the Shaker schools because it could influence white parents," Schoenberg said.
- Board president Freda Levenson disagreed that climate issues are a secret and responded to Schoenberger's threat to vote "no" on the upcoming May levy. "Failure to provide the schools with adequate resources is certainly not the solution to this problem or any problem," Levenson said.

Compiled by Emily Grannis and Lauren Weiss

With new site, seniors will no longer lounge in remote region

BY KELLY EISELE
STAFF REPORTER

For seniors, their lounge is an oasis hidden from the rest of the school where they can escape the hassle of underclassmen. Even though the lounge is moving next year, the atmosphere is predicted to stay the same.

The senior lounge, located on the lower level next to the South Gym, is removed from the rest of the school, but upcoming renovations will combine Room 253B, a study hall room, and the teachers' cafeteria, and designate that space as the new senior lounge.

The current senior space will be the teachers' cafeteria.

Principal Michael Griffith said the purpose of moving the lounge is to make lunch periods more efficient.

"Our purpose is to try to make it so that through periods three and eight, we reduce the amount of traffic in hallways," Griffith said.

Griffith added that with the current layout, seniors waste a lot of time in transit.

In addition to changing the location, Griffith hopes to make fun additions to the room, such as ping-pong or Foosball tables and even a possible sound system.

The convenience of the new location is appealing to junior Emily Axel, who thinks the change has positive aspects.

"It will be good because it's closer to the lunch line, and people won't need to wander up and down the school to get food," Axel said. "[But] it defeats the purpose of having a senior lounge if you're just going to be in the same place as everyone else."

Junior Kris Stovall is optimistic about the increased convenience. "It's hard to get to," Stovall said about the current lounge. "[The new location] will be more convenient."

While the administration has not yet settled on the exact details of the new lounge, they have met with architects and are starting to come up with ideas.

Many students are concerned changes restricting open campus will follow the building alterations.

"I hope this isn't a move by the administration to limit freedom and access," junior Hyunho Lee said.

Griffith has assured students they will not lose their freedoms. "We are still an open campus," he said.

Brett-Eiger

High school community mourns loss of 'outgoing' friend, classmate

BY EMILY GRANNIS
EDITOR IN CHIEF

The brightness of students' St. Patrick's Day attire contrasted sharply with sadness on their faces. Shaker students poured out of OGT testing March 17 and into the halls with red eyes and soft voices.

"I gotta be alone for a minute," one student told his friend.

He was one of many students who were reacting with sadness to the death of their classmate, sophomore Keely Brett-Eiger. She died March 16 at age 16.

"Whether we knew Keely personally or just know that she existed, we all feel terrible," said Marcia Jaffe, who advises the Student Group on Race Relations. Brett-Eiger had been a member of the group since freshman year.

"I think we have to reach out and do for each other what we would do for Keely if she were still here," Jaffe added.

According to district Director of Communications Peggy Caldwell, Brett-Eiger had an "eclectic" group of friends whom she met through theater and choir at the middle school. Her friend Max Chernin said Brett-Eiger knew "everyone" and asked that people remember her as an "outgoing person." She also participated in the high school choir during her freshman year.

Brett-Eiger's brother, Liam, graduated in 2005 and her sister, Maura, is an eighth grader at the middle school.

Photo illustration by Dan Snider • The Shakerite

NURSE PAULA DWORKIN demonstrates how she would check a student for a stiff neck -- one common symptom of bacterial meningitis. Other symptoms include high fever and headache. The only conclusive meningitis test, however, is a spinal tap.

MENINGITIS CASE CAUSES COMMUNITY CONCERN

BY SARAH WEISS
BUSINESS MANAGER

High school students have long been warned against the dangers of unhygienic behaviors such as sharing drinks and eating without first washing hands.

You'll catch someone's cold, get the flu from your teammate or, worse yet, develop mononucleosis and miss a month of school.

Today, however, that traditional and often disregarded advice is far more serious. In recent years, meningitis has replaced mono in the hierarchy of illnesses passed through close personal contact among high school and college students.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, "meningitis is an infection of the fluid of a person's spinal cord and the fluid that surrounds the brain." The illness is caused by viruses or by bacteria. The viral form, which appears often in children, goes away by itself in a week or so. The bacterial form occurs in both adults and children and is fatal if not treated in a timely fashion. About 2,400 to 3,000 cases of bacterial meningitis occur annually in the United States.

Symptoms include a high fever, headache and stiff neck. They can appear in as little as a few hours but may also take up to one or two days to develop. Because meningitis symptoms resemble those often attributed to flu, diagnosis can prove difficult, either because victims do not seek medical attention or because physicians cannot easily identify the virus.

The frequency of meningitis outbreaks has prompted individuals and institutions to suggest or even require students obtain a meningitis vaccine before enrolling in college or even attending a summer camp. In 2001, the Ohio Department of Health vaccinated nearly 6,000 high school students in and around Alliance after two students died and one became very ill due to a meningitis outbreak. Health officials believe the illness was spread when the students shared a water bottle at a school picnic.

The illness and vaccine have been hot topics throughout Shaker Heights in recent weeks after the death of Elena Steinberg, a first grader at Boulevard Elementary School, Feb. 22. Her death was attributed to bacterial meningitis.

According to Peggy Caldwell, district director of communications, Steinberg had been in school that Tuesday but stayed home on Wednesday. That afternoon, she died.

In a letter to parents, Scott Frank, director of health for the city of Shaker Heights, said meningitis "is spread by person-to-person contact, through droplets of infected respiratory secretions. Close personal contact is required for transmission of the infection."

Close personal contact is defined as being in the same class, club or playgroup as the infected person, Frank said.

For high school students, this can mean sitting on the same bus, kissing, sharing a drink or any other "close contact with other people with the germ," said Diane Burgin, pediatrician and mother of Shaker students.

Burgin said meningitis is rarely seen in young children, and is most common among kids in high school and college.

"These are the kids I worry about," Burgin said.

Burgin suggests the vaccine for children at 11 or 12 years.

"An immunization -- Prevnar -- is available that protects against about 80 percent of the common strains of pneumococcus [bacterial meningitis]," Frank said.

by the #'s

11-19	percent of people for whom the infection is not fatal have resulting conditions such as rashes or high fevers
4	types of meningococcal diseases can be treated by the vaccine
100	percent of incoming college freshmen are recommended to be vaccinated before leaving for school
30	percent of all meningitis cases are found in adolescents
100-125	cases of meningitis are found each year on college campuses
11	percent of the population can be carriers for the meningococcal bacteria

PUTTING SUCCESS ON THE FAST TRACK

• Students enrolled in special program work to complete two years of school in one

Editors' note: Student names are pseudonyms.

BY EMILY GRANNIS
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Bobby O'Connor • The Shakerite

FAST TRACK TEAM teachers Angela Harrell, Emily Shrestha, Katie Noveske and Michael Becker discuss their classes. The teachers meet during lunch most days to plan and catch one another up on the day's events. They began collaborating on the program last summer, when they chose students, met with families and planned curriculum. Despite their extensive preparation, the teachers described the beginning of the school year as "intense." Harrell said they could only plan so much. "It was kind of like having a baby -- you can't really plan," she said.

"We're everywhere. We're big brother."

That Orwellian assertion comes from English teacher Emily Shrestha, one of four teachers who collaboratively aim to help 12 students complete two years of high school in two semesters.

The new program is called Fast Track, and there is no falling asleep in the back row of these classes. When you only have 11 classmates, no one can fade into the background.

Fast Track student Alex said he feels the push to stay engaged this year. "I think we got more attention," he said.

The Achievement Committee, a faculty committee Shrestha is a member of, developed Fast Track to help students who didn't have enough credits to move from freshman to sophomore year. The students had to have good attendance and few serious behavior issues, according to Academic Adviser Mary Lynne McGovern. The Achievement Committee developed the program after the federal No Child Left Behind Act began to penalize schools for students who took longer than four years to graduate.

Katie Noveske, the team's social studies teacher and a member of the Achievement Committee, said she thinks the prospect of rejoining their class junior year is an important incentive for Fast Track students.

"They want that junior-year status big time," she said, acknowledging that NCLB did have an influence on committee members. "On a very practical level, having people not graduate from high school is a problem," she said.

The program started the year with 17 students and now has 12. Noveske said, "It was not a good fit" for the five who dropped.

The students take double periods of English, social studies and math, and a single science class each day in an effort to fit two years of curriculum into one. They get a four-minute break between all the standard periods, but some students said they had trouble adjusting to block scheduling. James, however, said it was easy.

Bobby O'Connor • The Shakerite

MATH TEACHER ANGELA Harrell begins her Fast Track class March 15. Harrell said she has had to adjust the way she plans her classes to fit a double period.

"It went by FAST," he said. "The first day we sat in the classroom and we had block schedules, it was long -- and the thing that surprised me is what you can get used to."

The teachers said their biggest adjustment came when planning for a 105-minute period rather than a 50-minute class. Adapting to block-scheduled classes poses a challenge for school administrators, too. Principal Michael Griffith said the only additional cost to running Fast Track is balancing class sizes and teachers' schedules. He said the district must determine whether it is less cost-effective having the Fast Track teachers working on a block schedule.

"It becomes a question of cost. If things are tight and we're down on staffing . . . You have to weigh all that out," he said.

For Fast Track teachers who teach double classes, their block-scheduled sections count as two classes toward the four or five they are contracted to teach. Noveske said she decided to work on the program for smaller classes and a new approach.

"It's very frustrating as a teacher if you have a big class," Noveske said. "[Fast Track] seemed like the promise of an ideal situation."

She said she tries to integrate the freshman Global Studies curriculum with the sophomore U.S. history class, adding that although both classes have World War II units, she teaches the topic once, but thoroughly.

"In general, I'm just going into way more depth," Noveske said.

Shrestha and Angela Harrell, the team's math teacher, emphasized the need for a something new. All four of the teachers believed having the students simply repeat freshman year would be less effective.

"It just seemed like there had to be a better way than reading 'Romeo and Juliet' three times," Shrestha said. She, unlike the other teachers, focuses on only tenth-grade books with her students. "We're sticking to the tenth grade curriculum and doing it with so much more in-depth [study] . . . I wish my other 10 CP classes could be the same," she added.

Harrell also expressed a desire to see change.

"To just do things like you've always done them, I didn't want to do that," she said. "Our expectations are way up here," she added, holding her hand above her head. "And they've definitely been working toward those expectations . . . They're definitely all doing better than last year." The students agree this year is better than their freshman years. Alex said he's more invested in his classes this year than last.

"Last year I used to just cuss out my teachers and basically not care . . . This year you care a little more," he said. "I think we got the four main-subject best teachers in the building."

James said individual focus is a crucial part of the program.

"We get help whenever we want it, whenever we need it," he said. "We get catered to way more than my regular classes last year."

Noveske said the teachers enjoy it, too.

"I love hanging out with them [and] seeing them be excited to go to class," she said.

True to Shrestha's initial thought, the teachers are in constant communication throughout the day. They e-mail each other about what happens with the students in class and share updates about what is happening in the students' home lives as well.

"I think the class creates somewhat of a family for them," Harrell said. "I think that makes a difference."

The teachers began meeting over the summer to plan their classes and approach. They also met all of their students and the students' parents before the school year started, the final requirement for a student to participate in the program.

"We laid out the framework so everybody knows what to expect," Noveske said. She added that the teachers continue to meet with parents. "As a teacher, the more you can work with and communicate with a student's parents, especially if the student is struggling, the better."

Despite their preparation, the teachers were surprised by the intensity of the beginning of the year.

"It was kind of like having a baby – you can't really plan," Harrell said. "We all felt as though they could be successful even before we met them." She said parents were surprised to get positive feedback about their students. "At the first open house parents were like, 'Are you for real? You're talking about my kid?' " she said.

Harrell and biology teacher Michael Becker, a member of the faculty Pedagogy Committee, said it's most rewarding for them to see their students understanding and enjoying class.

"I think the biggest challenge for us was changing their mentality as students," Harrell said. Becker added, "It's like, 'Hey! I know this stuff!' "

Nicole said the group has learned how to be better students.

"Everybody's getting good grades this year – better than what last year was," she said. "We're more organized this year, too."

Fast Track's status for next year is still unclear. The team hopes to continue the program, and they say they have been receiving good feedback from administrators. The students also recommend continuing the program.

"I think they should, but I think they should put it so more kids could be involved," Alex said.

James worried that if there were more students involved it would give them an excuse not to take freshman year seriously. But another student disagreed.

"You don't know that for sure," he told James.

McGovern also disagreed with James.

"We do not believe that ninth graders would look at this as a reason not to work hard or take ninth grade seriously," she said.

Griffith said the program's fate depends on how much the district has to cut staff for next year.

"There's no question the program is valuable," he said. "[But] if the levy doesn't pass there's no doubt we couldn't do it . . . It's a question even if the levy passes whether or not we can do it."

The teachers said they have seen changes in their students' attitudes. "Even if they struggle, they can fight through," Becker said.

While they are all pleased with the progress their students have made this year, the four unanimously declared their biggest reward would come later.

"Going to their graduation in two years," they said.

FAST TRACK FOUR

Michael Becker
BIOLOGY

Angela Harrell
MATH

Katie Noveske
SOCIAL STUDIES

Emily Shrestha
ENGLISH

Ohio news

1. Springboro
Feb. 28, 2006

Three students from Springboro High School were placed in juvenile detention on 21 drug trafficking charges. The trio, who had been notorious in the school for selling marijuana, cocaine and hallucinogenic mushrooms, even offered to sell a gun to undercover Warren County drug agents, who allegedly bought drugs from the 16- and 17-year-olds during a three-month investigation. In the opinion of John Burke, commander of the Warren County Drug Task Force, “I don’t think they have any more [drug trafficking] than any other school situation. We just happened to develop a case in this school. It could have been any school.”

Compiled from http://news.enquirer.com

2. Columbus
Feb. 19, 2006

Ohio state Rep. Ron Hood of Pickaway County, recently proposed that a course on gun safety and marksmanship be added to the state’s curriculum for high schools. In Hood’s opinion, “It’s wise and prudent that we give high school students an opportunity to learn and understand firearms.” Opponents to the bill, The Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence, called a potential relationship between schools and guns “a little bit obscene.” The bill has been assigned to the House’s education committee for consideration.

Compiled from www.cleveland.com

3. Columbus
March 7, 2006

Cameras were installed in the auditorium of Mifflin High School in Columbus following the assault of a girl in that location which led to criminal charges against students and the dismissal of the principal. The school made national news because administrators did not call police to report the girl’s allegations, as required by law. The two teens involved pleaded guilty in November to delinquency counts of felonious assault.

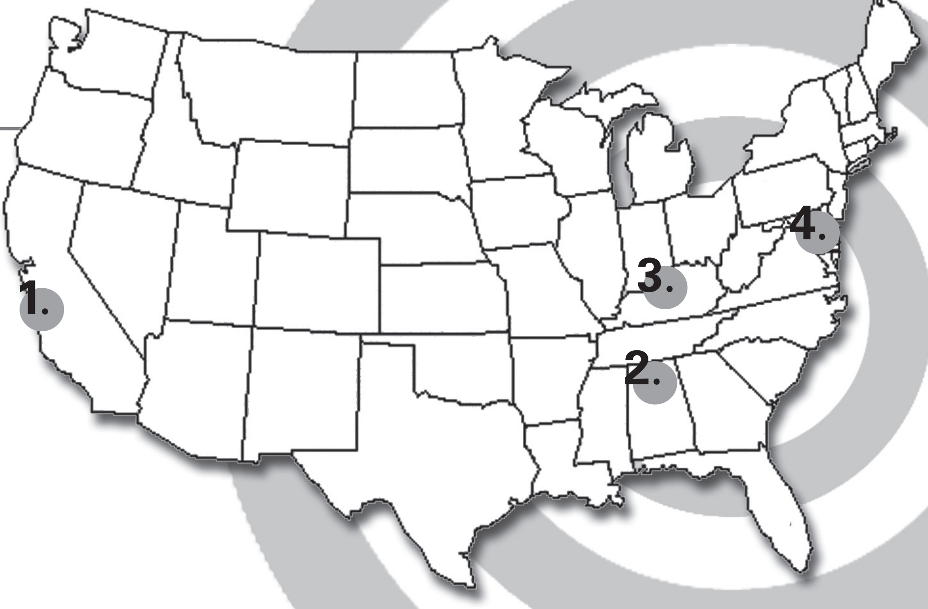
Compiled from www.ohio.com

4. Ayersville
March 14, 2006

A former Ayersville High School teacher was jailed last month following a sexual encounter she had with a 17-year-old student. The former teacher, Nicole Marie Long, 29, was sentenced to 90 days in jail and lost her teaching license. The student involved has lost opportunities to play high school and college sports. In response to the situation, Long said, “I deeply regret my actions that took place this summer.”

Compiled from www.toledoblade.com

USA news



1. San Francisco
March 8, 2006

Two Ukiah High School students sued the U.S. Marine Corps based in San Francisco last month, alleging that Marine Corps recruiters had raped them. The two 18-year-olds also claimed that the corps “fosters and condones’’ sexual assaults by recruiters. Each of the students, both women, seeks roughly $1 million in damages from the Marines and the two recruiters. In response to the allegations, Marine Corps Maj. Michael Samarov commented, “The Marine Corps prides itself that we are a band of brothers and sisters. All Marines are treated fairly, firmly and with dignity and compassion.’’

Compiled from www.sfgate.com

2. Priceville, Ala.
Feb. 21, 2006

Steve King, a teacher at Fyffe High School, was arrested last month following a verbal exchange he had with Guy Bowling, Priceville High School’s principal, after exhibiting disorderly conduct at a girls’ high school basketball game. Although King had previously been banned from local sporting events for fighting, according to Fyffe Principal Ricky Bryant, who witnessed the incident, “[King] got a raw deal.”

Compiled from www.nbc13.com

3. Louisville, KY
Feb. 14, 2006

Paul Dawson, a Valley High School teacher, was suspended for 10 days without pay last month for using the word “nigga” in a conversation he was having with a student. In addition to the suspension, Dawson was ordered to attend mandatory diversity training. This is not the first time Dawson has used controversial terms in the classroom; in the past he has admitted to calling students “hoes,” “Pillsbury Dough Boy” and ordering a student to put a sign saying “I am gay” on to another student’s back.

Compiled from www.whas11.com

4. Bethesda, Md.
Feb. 26, 2006

Last month, 17-year-old Andrew Saraf of Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School called for the banning of a Peace Studies course offered at his school. Saraf’s reason for demanding the ban is that “the ‘class’ is headed by an individual with a political agenda, who wants to teach students the ‘right’ way of thinking by giving them facts that are skewed in one direction.” Since its inception at the school in 1988, the Peace Studies course has provoked lively debate, but this attempt to have the course removed from the curriculum is a first.

Compiled from www.washingtonpost.com

Infographic by Allie Jennings • The Shakerite
Compiled by Scott Underwood

NEW HALLWAY DANGER

One more reason Shaker needs an indoor track: pedestrians who try to walk in the building at 4 p.m. while athletes sprint through hallways and charge up and down stairs. Not only is it more dangerous to attempt the stairs than it is to step out onto Shaker Boulevard (the cars might stop — the athletes will just smash you into the wall), but it's also impossible to breathe in the cloud of sweat and body odor that engulfs the corridors. Please build a field house before we have to write a news story about a 90-pound freshman who was run over by a 300-pound offensive tackle.

Calling all members of the silent majority

HALLE
BAUER

The lack of civility is an issue at Shaker Heights High School, and many are confused about the problem. Many people deny that there is a problem at all. But civility - respectful and polite behavior - is no longer apparent, as students are increasingly rude to their teachers and peers. And those who are respectful sit back, relax and enjoy today's show - a comedy about the absence of civility that should provide the foundation of our school.

I have discussed the issue of respect many times over with various groups of adults and fellow students. Most believe that only the impolite students are causing the problem, and that this is only a small number of students - a minority.

Another argument contends that the many students who are courteous are simply not as noticeable as the those who exhibit blaring insolence.

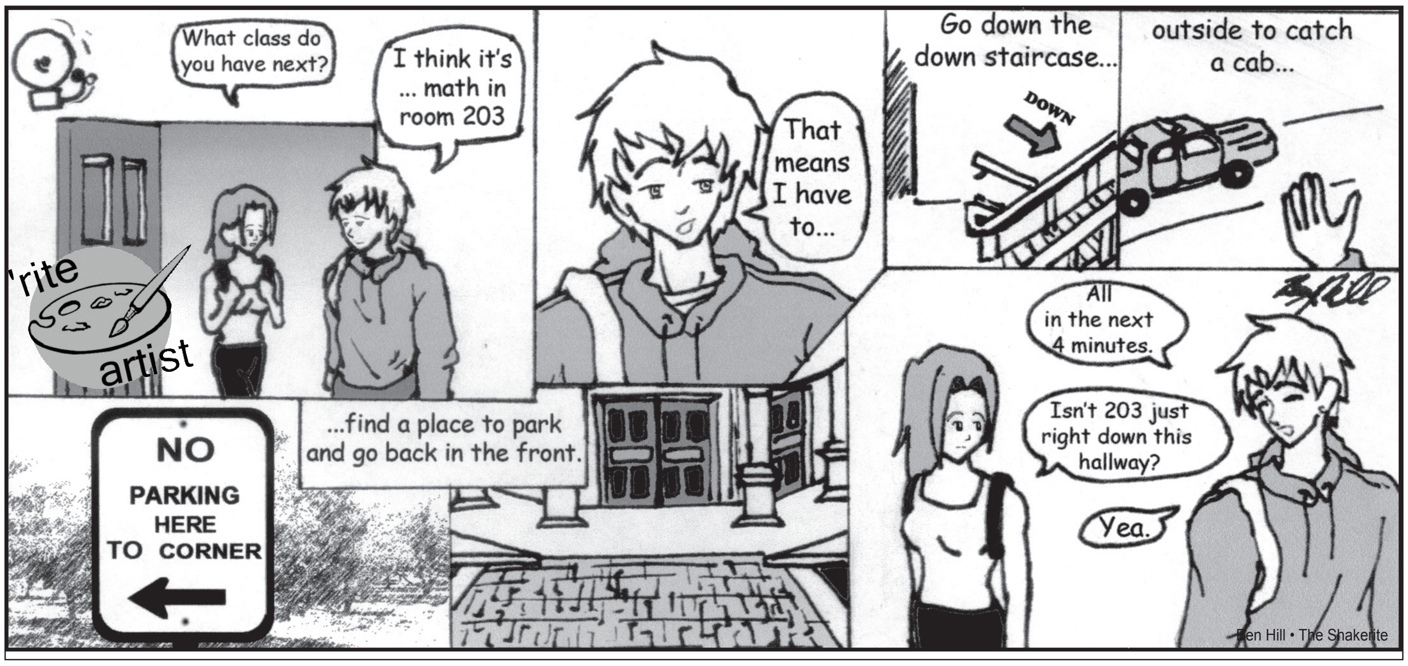
I agree that only a few lack respect, but the silent majority of students who understand the problem and either deny it exists or do nothing to solve it are the greater cause of our sufferings.

Being the optimist that I am, I didn't believe that civility was an issue until I witnessed a great atrocity in the senior lounge. I was sitting with my friends when an argument suddenly escalated at the next table. Soon two girls were shouting insults at each other while about 50 other seniors sat, staring.

One of the girls ran out as the other continued to throw insults in her face. The crowd laughed and egged on the bad behavior. By this time, the senior lounge had transformed - roars of laughter filled the air, and many seniors shouted vulgarities toward the door. Even the substitute teacher stationed in the lounge was smiling and laughing. More disturbing than the actual fight was the fact that I was the only one disturbed. While the details of the argument were fuzzy, one thing was crystal clear - the girl who ran out of the lounge had been humiliated and hurt.

I was embarrassed that my peers - seniors, leaders of the school - neglected to show any compassion. Somewhere along the road, our student body embraced a culture that thinks fighting is funny. We don't just sit and gape at another's wounds, we laugh and smother them in salt. We collide in the halls without apologies. We sit quietly, hiding our embarrassment when a few students laugh and yell during assemblies. We stand silently when the crowd erupts into offensive cheers at hockey games. Clearly there is a silent majority that accepts embarrassing behavior as the norm at the high school.

This is a call to action. The majority of students who do not directly cause problems shouldn't allow disrespect. These students, staff members and administrators should stand up and stop blending in with the crowd. Respect can and should make a comeback at Shaker Heights High School. We just have to stop expecting and encouraging a lack of civility.


What class do you have next?
I think it's ... math in room 203
That means I have to...
Go down the down staircase...
DOWN
outside to catch a cab...
NO PARKING HERE TO CORNER
...find a place to park and go back in the front.
All in the next 4 minutes.
Isn't 203 just right down this hallway?
Yea.

Ben Hill • The Shakerite

BRING SANKOFA TO CLASSROOMS, TOO

Sankofa is always a wonderful performance; this year was no exception. Not only is the production student-written and performed, it is also one of the few assemblies that successfully engage the audience. It is refreshing to see students so appreciative of their peers' dedicated effort to reclaim the past and use it to make a better future.

As part of a Black History Month celebration, however, the school does not take advantage of the opportunities for discussions about race that Sankofa presents.

The performance provides examples of instances in history when race relations were sub-par and African Americans overcame injustice, but each February, the assembly and its aftermath fail to make the most of a chance to learn and grow. Sankofa should serve as catalyst to a school-wide discussion on race relations. The faculty should lead students in discussions of race relations as they stand today after the assembly sets the tone with examples from history.

For example, this year's Sankofa performance included a step routine that gave voice to the reprehensible discrimination directed at African-American men who served in the military during World War I. The skit was a perfect opportunity to connect the performance to a contemporary problem. As the War on Terror continues, it increasingly pressures minority communities, which send a disproportionate number of their youth to the military, where they also endure disproportionate casualties. A post-Sankofa discussion in a variety of classes might have explored how the roles of African Americans in the military and society have or have not changed since the days of the Harlem Hell Fighters and what role academic achievement plays in creating options in the military and beyond. Not only would such a discussion be educational, but it would also help students forge a stronger link between the past and the future.

Sankofa is an important opportunity for growth. Students talk about the performance for the remainder of the day. If faculty were informed in advance about the content of each year's performance, they could plan instruction to take advantage of the assembly's substance. Without that kind of integrated approach, too many students leave the Large Auditorium thinking Sankofa is nothing more than entertainment.

top 10 RESPONSES TO TEACHER REQUESTS

Teachers: cut out the Top 10 section, and place a check in the box of each response you receive while addressing unruly students in the hallways. The first teacher to return the completed checklist to Room 231 will receive a prize.

- ☐ Make me
- ☐ Just chill out
- ☐ Go to hell
- ☐ You're not my teacher
- ☐ You need to watch it
- ☐ No comment, but they act like you're not there
- ☐ I have a free period.
- ☐ Mr. Griffith said it was OK.
- ☐ Don't point your finger at me
- ☐ No

All encouraged to cheer

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

For some, cheerleading is something we thought about as we were growing up. We wanted to be a cheerleader in school, and cheerleading is truly a big deal at SHHS. Our cheerleaders compete in citywide, regional and national competitions. In addition to being excellent students, we have won at the national level. We have some students that live, eat, breathe and sleep being a cheerleader at SHHS. However, something is missing -- diversity. Shaker is said to be a school that is proud of its diversity, but there is still work to be done in that area for our cheerleading squad. It would be nice to see our cheerleaders represent our school's diversity.

We need students from all ethnic backgrounds coming out to participate in the cheerleading clinic and in tryouts for the squads. Let's hope that this cheer year is as diverse as our school. Clinics are April 25-27 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., and tryouts are April 28 from 4:30 to 7 p.m. COME ON OUT, SHAKER!

Cheerfully yours,

Vikki K. Long
cheeleader adviser

CHANGING MORE THAN CLOTHES

• Quest for respectful behavior should not stop at locker room door

Photo illustration by Dan Snider and Wesley Lowery • The Shakerite

Trash talk does not make the man

JOSH DAVIDSON

Why do you talk so much?

For serious. I'm trying to change from my sweat-soaked, nasty clothes into some semi-decent smelling garments, and all I hear is, "That mother (bleep) better watch his back."

But that's it. I only hear stuff. And I'm sick of it.

Not once have I ever seen anyone throw down in the men's locker room after P.E. class.

Yet, day after day, the talking continues -- more and more insults and more and more talk of how one young man is going to "wreck" another young man.

If they were men, they would actually take one of two actions.

They'd either stop talking or start fighting.

Personally, I'd love to see the talking stop. I believe in peaceful conflict resolution.

It would make me incredibly happy if the hate that exists in the locker room could stop through a mediated meeting between two word warriors.

That's all that would be needed to end the dumb conflicts that erupt every day.

If these two men could sit down, talk to each other and work out their differences, the ongoing "I'm such a tough guy thing" could stop.

But if the problems are so eminent that a non-violent resolution cannot be reached, then fight already. (Off school property, please. We don't need anymore hallway fight-jams to make us late to class).

Whip out the fists and let loose. Let the blood fly, the eyes blacken and the conflict end in a glorious, testosterone extravaganza.

It'll turn you into a man, son. It'll make you stronger, faster, better. And most importantly to me, it'll make you stop talking about fighting.

But I really hope that they can resolve their issues without the fight.

I'm so weary of hearing fake manliness spew from their mouths every day.

We're supposed to be men, so why not be the strong, silent type for a change?

Hostile locker room behavior too often ignored

WESLEY LOWERY

After five months of mastering Shaker's grueling health curriculum, I eagerly signed up for what I thought would be the most relaxing class of the day: Advanced P.E.

As I entered the locker room, I was forced back to reality. It wasn't the gruesome smell that encompassed the locker room and all who dared to enter. That was expected. What shocked me were the deafening shouts of obscenity and gay baiting.

I fought my to way to my gym locker, past dozens of half-dressed males whose cockiness was surpassed only by their desire to defend their sexuality to their classmates.

I went to the north gym for class, which consisted of a half-hearted lap around our section of the gym and a few, futile attempts to organize a game of basketball.

As I headed back to the locker room, my sole aspiration was that my profanity-inclined classmates had been calmed by 45 minutes of physical activity.

"Man, you cheated."

"What you talking 'bout? We kicked yo' ass."

"You're gay!"

Maybe I expected too much of my classmates, but then again, isn't this dialogue the same behavior adults have worked all year to eliminate? Students should be expected to maintain civility throughout the building, not just in hallways and classrooms.

A blaring cell phone jarred my thoughts. As I strained to decipher the words of the staticky rap/ring, a man in a red shirt approached. Security. Maybe he would demand this barrage of vulgarity and disrespect stop.

"Put away that phone."

"Man, that wasn't me."

"That's bull----," the security guard replied.

Maybe I expected too much out of this security guard; why should he be expected to set an example for students who obviously don't want to comply?

However, after placing all of our focus on students' hallway behavior, isn't it time we start looking at the entire school environment and the entire school's behavior?

The locker rooms exemplify the inconsistencies in behavioral expectations throughout the school building.

When students enter this unregulated realm, they leave their inhibitions at the door, and let loose with all of the uncivil behavior they've stored up throughout the day.

Locker rooms should be safe, peaceful environments, not hotbeds for hostility and tension. Let's stop the contention so I can finally find some relaxation in Advanced P.E.

'rite idea

These Little Piggies Have None

- Lack of respect for school environment causes multiple clean ups for custodial staff

Each morning, you may not notice the custodial staff starting the day by cleaning up the mess you managed to make while sitting on the floor in the half hour before school starts. It's not that there are no trash cans at school. It's just that as teenagers, some of us haven't learned how to use them. So, for those of you who are still striving to master this difficult skill, here's a quick refresher course, courtesy of The Shakerite.

Step one: Pick up item to be discarded. This may involve bending over, reaching and grasping.

Step two: Stand up. If necessary, use wall for balance.

Step three: Raise left knee slightly toward ceiling and extend left foot forward, placing heel and then toe on ground. Repeat with opposite leg and foot.

Step four: Repeat step three until you reach nearest trash receptacle.

Step five: Lift arm and extend over trash can so item hovers directly above opening. (Note: Do not attempt a three-pointer.)

Step six: Open fingers, allowing item to fall directly into trash can. Perform visual scan to make sure object landed in trash can.

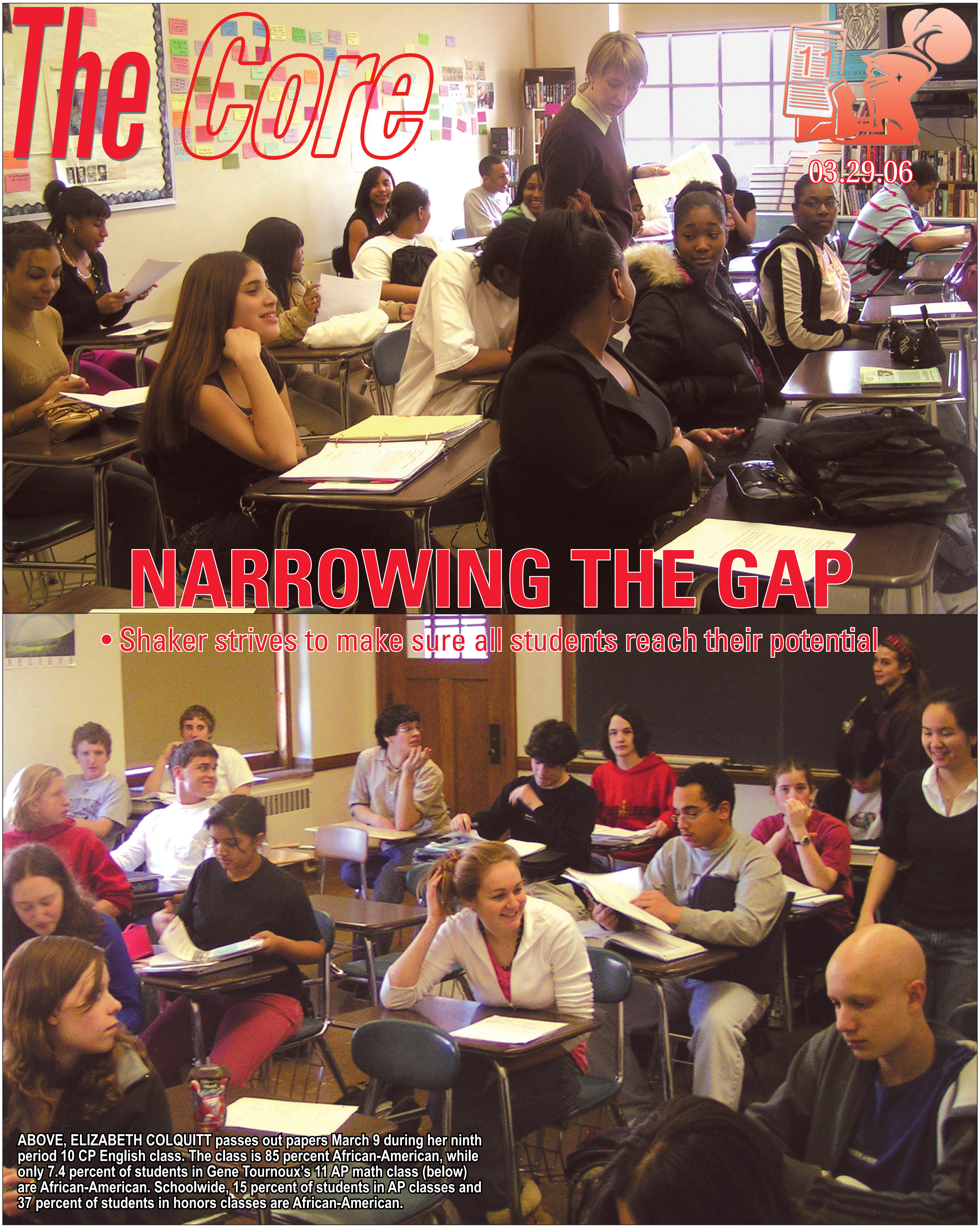
Step seven: Repeat steps one - six each time you have an item to discard. (And if you're not sure whether that Starburst wrapper was yours or your neighbor's, be a doll and throw it away.)

Photos by Aviva Ariel • The Shakerite
Infographic by Bobby O'Connor • The Shakerite

The Core

NARROWING THE GAP

• Shaker strives to make sure all students reach their potential



ABOVE, ELIZABETH COLQUITT passes out papers March 9 during her ninth period 10 CP English class. The class is 85 percent African-American, while only 7.4 percent of students in Gene Tournoux's 11 AP math class (below) are African-American. Schoolwide, 15 percent of students in AP classes and 37 percent of students in honors classes are African-American.

Dan Snider • The Shakerite

COMPLEX ISSUES, NO QUICK FIXES

• The achievement gap, while getting smaller, continues to trouble the district

Bobby O'Connor • The Shakerite

BY LAUREN WEISS
THE CORE EDITOR

"In my math class, we are all white except we have an Asian in our class," freshman Hannah Kowen, who is Caucasian, said of her Advanced Placement Algebra II class with Margaret Boles.

Kowen's experience exemplifies many of Shaker's honors and AP classes. African-American students comprise 37 percent of students in honors classes in the middle school and high school. According to district figures, these numbers are up; in the 2001-02 school year, African-Americans averaged 1.75 honors or advanced classes per student, while African-American students this year average 2.4.

However, as Principal Michael Griffith says, the district hasn't come far enough.

"We continue to have a significant number of students for whom we're not seeing the level of performance that they're capable of," he said.

The disproportionately low number of African-Americans in advanced classes (they make up 52 percent of the high school population) and what Griffith terms the "potential gap" (the disparity between what students can achieve and how they perform in school) represent a nationally identified achievement gap, an issue Shaker has struggled with since its schools integrated in the 1950s. The subject of ABC and CNN documentaries about efforts to close the gap, Shaker was also the case study for "Black American Students in an Affluent Suburb: A Study of Academic Disengagement," a book by the late Cal-Berkeley anthropology professor John Ogbu, and part of Harvard professor Ronald Ferguson's study of the Minority Student Achievement Network, which Shaker helped found in 1999.

Math teacher Walter Slovikovski said he has seen evidence of the gap in his one general, three college prep and one honors classes. He said the failure rate in his CP class exceeds that of his honors class.

"The CP classes are predominately African-American," Slovikovski said. "The honors class is more blended, but it's mostly white."

In AP classes, however, only 15 percent of students are African-American.

Senior Miriam Mack, an African-American student who takes mostly AP classes, said all of her classes this year are and most in past years were predominantly white.

"At this point, it's pretty standard," Mack said. "I don't really notice it. Even with my friends I'm in the minority."

Mack said she has always pushed herself in school and plans to attend college because she wants a good career.

The under-representation of African-American students in advanced classes concerns many educators and researchers for a number of reasons. "Answers in the Tool Box: Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelor's Degree Attainment," a U.S. Department of Education study that followed high school sophomores in 1980 through their 20s, showed that students who take advanced high school classes are more likely to complete bachelor's degrees than those who pursue standard academic tracks.

"The impact of a high school curriculum of high academic intensity and quality on degree completion is far more pronounced . . . for African-American and Latino students than any other pre-college indicator of academic resources," the report stated.

THE GAP PERSISTS, WITHOUT ONE SPECIFIC CAUSE

In his book, Ogbu theorized that many African-American students did not see school as a means to success and viewed teachers as uncaring. In addition, he noted that parents of African-American students tended to be less directly involved in their children's schoolwork.

Cultural issues, such as the ones Ogbu articulated, are one factor that contributes to the achievement gap. Other researchers, including Ferguson, consider the importance of socio-economic factors. For example, Ferguson's 2003 study stated that African Americans tended to have fewer books and computers at home than their white peers.

Dr. Dale Whittington, district director of testing/research and evaluation, said it is clear that students' current performance does not necessarily equal their potential.

Whittington also emphasized that the majority of research shows correlations, not causes. Her statement was repeated by Director of Communications Peggy Caldwell.

"If there was a single cause to the achievement gap, we would have fixed it by now," Caldwell said.

According to Shaker's Fact Book, what is often perceived as a racial gap can also be seen as an income gap. The data is based mostly on U.S. Census responses from 2000. District wide, 16.8 percent of African-Americans lived in poverty, while only 3.1 percent of whites did.

Slovikovski has also noticed more distractions in class.

"It's cooler to do things other than study and get good grades," he said.

In his research, Ogbu also looked at the pressure on African-American students to not "act white." He saw a culture of students for whom doing well academically meant rejecting their friends.

Mack said she has never paid attention to students who told her not to achieve.

"They were usually people who didn't matter to me," she said.

"SIGNIFICANT" RESOURCES USED TO COMBAT GAP

Entering school with economic disadvantages is one reason why Griffith says the school uses "significant" resources to give struggling students extra attention.

With those resources, Shaker has piloted a number of programs to address the achievement gap, including the Minority Achievement Committees, which Griffith says is one of Shaker's most successful programs.

"MAC affirms and encourages students of color," Griffith said. "It tells students it's OK to be achievers."

Griffith also cited teacher creativity and the influence of peer groups, such as those created by study circles, as ways of reaching out to African-American students.

"If you feel success and you're engaged, you're not going to be involved in negative behaviors," he said. "The byproducts of disengaged students are huge."

Slovikovski wants to see the district work with students at all levels while emphasizing efforts at younger ages.

"We also need to work more with parents, to stress to them the importance of doing well," he said.

In addition, Whittington said the achievement gap, which persists nationwide, is enhanced in Shaker because European-American students are "incredibly unusual." She said Shaker's African-American students, as a whole, are on par with all students statewide (irrespective of race), but the European-American students in the district perform, as a whole, beyond those standards.

Dr. Mark Freeman, superintendant, emphasized that the district's goal is to improve education for all students. He said the district is "not complacent" and that taking comfort in comparing Shaker's African-American students to students statewide is dangerous.

"They're not in the whole state - they're in Shaker," he said.

Kelsey DeForest contributed to this story.

WHERE SHAKER STANDS NOW

45 percentage of African Americans in co-curricular activities	**70** percentage of European Americans in co-curricular activities
$54,482 median income of African-American households	**$106,617** median income of European-American households
93% attendance rate for African-American students	**95%** attendance rate for European-American students

Compiled by Lauren Weiss from the district Fact Book and presentations made to the Board of Education in fall 2005. All figures refer to the district as a whole.

A few students keep others from achieving

For decades Shaker has strived to achieve an integrated and successful school district. While boasting victories on many fronts, Shaker has yet to conquer its true adversary: the achievement gap between minorities and whites.

While we have implemented many “solutions,” they have all fallen short. Despite the efforts of organizations such as the Minority Achievement Committee, the numbers show Shaker’s African Americans, though better than those in the rest of Ohio, are still not meeting their potential.

WESLEY LOWERY

In a district that is 52 percent African American, they only make up 37 percent of honors students and a mere 15 percent of Advanced Placement students.

Shaker has attempted to implement resources to encourage high achievement, but most students simply ignore these programs. For example, the Tutoring Center, which is open between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., is one of the most underutilized programs in the school.

Is it that African-American students aren’t as smart as white students? Of course not, but despite numerous attempts to get to the bottom of this ever-looming problem by schools across the country, it persists.

Another question that needs to be asked when discussing the achievement gap is whether or not College Preparatory classes are contributing to the problem. All you have to do is walk into a CP classroom and see the disproportionate number of African Americans who are enrolled. That so many African-Americans are in CP courses should not matter if they are indeed being prepared for college in those classes.

However, this isn’t the case. Facing the constant pressure from the district to see students “earn” passing grades, teachers dumb down CP classes in order to accommodate the lack of effort displayed by many of their students. On multiple occasions I witnessed students abuse this pressure by forcing teachers to use class time to re-teach the previous night’s homework assignment, which they failed to attempt or complete.

This constant re-teaching removes all depth from the class. There’s nothing more frustrating than sitting and listening to the same lesson for subsequent days because your underachieving classmates haven’t done their homework.

The real losers here aren’t the lazy students, but rather the students who are enrolled to prepare for college -- students who read the homework assignment, but are forced to re-read it in class. Students who do well on the test, but are forced to re-learn the unit because the rest of the class never read the book. These students -- who truly aspire to attend college -- suffer just as much as their underachieving peers.

These students must follow one of two paths: either move up in level and struggle to maintain passing grades in an honors and AP class, or remain in the dumbed-down CP class.

While there is hope of reaching our goal of improving minority achievement, it’s going to require teachers who are willing assign the work, students who are willing to do the work and administrators who are willing to fail students who refuse. The numbers show we’ve far surpassed our peers, but only time will tell if closing the gap is truly achievable.

How Shaker BRIDGES the GAP

Six programs designed to help students achieve

ON TRACK
Learn how Fast Track helps students catch up.
NOTEWORTHY, PAGE 6

FAST TRACK

Fast Track is a program the Achievement Committee piloted this year to help students who did not earn enough credits to move from freshman to sophomore status. Math, English and history (Global Studies and U.S. History) are taught in double periods, and students take an additional period of science each day.

Biology teacher Michael Becker said he wanted to teach in the Fast Track team.

“It seemed like a great opportunity and a great program,” he said.

Compiled by
Emily Grannis

MINORITY ACHIEVEMENT COMMITTEE

Through the Minority Achievement Committee Scholars and Sisters programs, high-achieving African-American juniors and seniors mentor freshmen and sophomores. The program involves 60-70 underclassmen who meet every other week to discuss diversity, setting goals, stereotypes and obstacles. There are similar programs at Woodbury and the middle school. Health teacher Hubert McIntyre and academic adviser Mary Lynne McGovern advise Scholars, while middle school guidance counselor Jasmine Corbitt and math teacher Georgette Young advise Sisters.

“The hope is that one day there won’t need to be a MAC program because African-American males are all achieving in school and it will no longer be necessary,” McGovern said.

Compiled by Adam Maraschky

THE TUTORING CENTER

The Tutoring Center, which is open Monday through Thursday from 4-7 p.m., gives students an opportunity to work together with teachers, older students and one another. There are classrooms devoted to math, English, science, social studies and foreign languages. Students can use it simply as a place to work on homework or to get help with concepts they don’t understand. There are approximately 6,000 visits to the Tutoring Center per year.

“Everyone doesn’t learn at the same rate,” said health teacher Hubert McIntyre, who oversees the Tutoring Center. “It is really designed to help students learn how to learn.”

Compiled by Eian Katz

BRIDGES

With the Bridges program, approximately 175 freshmen participate in group activities that relate to core subjects. The team-teaching format helps with study skills.

“The hope is that by getting to know students better . . . and developing stronger teacher-student relationships there will be better [test] results,” said Peggy Caldwell, district director of communications.

Compiled by Eian Katz
and Adam Maraschsky

EARLY INTERVENTION

Shaker offers two early intervention programs: the Kindergarten Resource Program and a public preschool.

The Kindergarten Resource Program identifies incoming kindergarteners who do poorly on pre-literacy tests (such as letter recognition) and try to help catch them up with the rest of the students through meetings with tutors three times a week. Despite progress made with these students, most of whom come from lower socio-economic classes, district statistics suggest that half of them leave the district by the time they reach fourth grade.

The public preschool, which has sites at Shaker Family Center (located in the former Sussex Elementary School) and Boulevard Elementary School, is designed for 3- and 4-year-old children with mental or physical disabilities. The 30-40 students enrolled in this school participate in speech and occupational therapy.

Compiled by Eian Katz

TASK FORCE NINE

Task Force Nine includes 12 freshmen who entered the high school with low grade point averages who the school has identified as not performing at their potential. They meet with an English and science teacher tenth period every Tuesday and Thursday. Tuesday sessions are devoted to working on study skills, such as note-taking, test taking, organization and time management, while Thursdays provide an opportunity for students to get help with homework.

“The goal is to get these ninth graders on track to be able to achieve at the level of their potential,” said Academic Adviser Mary Lynne McGovern. “The students leave the program . . . with study techniques that they didn’t have before.”

Compiled by Eian Katz
and Adam Maraschky

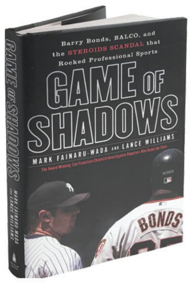
Infographic by Bobby O’Connor • The Shakerite

MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSICAL BRINGS AUDIENCE TO ITS FEET

The middle school play, "Fiddler on the Roof," deserves major props. It's a difficult play, what with all the dancing and the songs. However, the 81 seventh and eighth graders pulled it off with such grace (in spite of all the boys' whose voices cracked throughout the show) in front of a mostly high school and adult audience. Congratulations to all those who participated. And Theater Department, you have some great talent coming up in the next two years.

How to entertain yourself during spring break

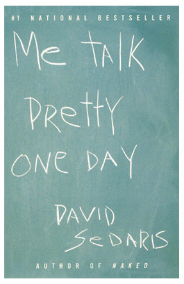
Get this



"GAME OF SHADOWS" BY MARK FAINARU-WADA AND LANCE WILLIAMS

Last year, we found out who in baseball used steroids, and everyone -- including Congress -- became paranoid about steroid use in sports. Just in time for opening day, you can renew your steroid outrage by reading all about Barry Bonds' drug use.

"ME TALK PRETTY ONE DAY" BY DAVID SEDARIS

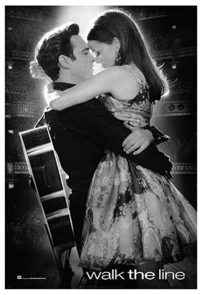


If you've ever had a speech impediment or run off to France with your lover, you and David will be best friends. This book features more than 25 short, satirical narratives that give you a unique look into the life of a humorist and often wildly inappropriate author.

"LADY AND THE TRAMP"

Your favorite Disney classic is now out on two-disc special edition DVD to celebrate its 50th anniversary. Although the dogs are prejudiced, in the end everyone lives happily ever after (it's Disney, after all). Though a totally cliché Disney movie, it is a classic that everyone should see.

"WALK THE LINE"



This biopic about Johnny Cash's life won an Oscar for Best Actress. The film focuses primarily on his love affair with June Carter, as well as his addiction to prescription drugs and alcohol. Though this is not a particularly happy movie, the end will make you believe that love can conquer everything (including your heavy addiction to amphetamines).

"WHATEVER PEOPLE SAY I AM THAT'S WHAT I'M NOT" ARCTIC MONKEYS

This English band is being called the next Rolling Stones. They hail the rebirth of popular British punk rock without the stupid red ties. Featuring sounds of old-school punk, with a large dose of classic rock, they are sure to be big in America.

"SOME HEARTS" CARRIE UNDERWOOD

Though Clevelanders love to hate country music, Carrie Underwood is a mix between the country you hate and the pop you love. But don't hold the fact that she won season four of "American Idol" against her.

Compiled by Liz Kantor

Courtesy of John Federer

THE WICKED WITCH OF THE EASTSIDE

MICHELLE FEDERER ('91) PLAYS Nessarose in the original cast of the hit Broadway musical, "Wicked." Federer left "Wicked" in January and is now Julia Roberts' understudy in the new play "Three Days of Rain," which opens in New York in April. Below: Federer discusses her experiences in "Wicked" at the Fairmount Circle Arabica Coffeehouse.

• Broadway star got her start with Shaker Theater

BY LIZ KANTOR
LIMELIGHT EDITOR

Before Michelle Federer joined the cast of last year's top-grossing Broadway musical, she was just a regular theater student.

"Homework and Ensemble, that's what I did," said the 1991 graduate. She was also in the Latin Club for one year.

Federer was in the original cast of the Tony Award-winning musical "Wicked," the previously untold story of the witches of Oz based on the Gregory Maguire novel of the same name. Federer played the Wicked Witch of the West's sister, Nessarose (Nessa for short). Nessa uses a wheelchair and, because of her disability, feels like an outcast. Federer said she could identify with Nessa.

"I felt a little bit that I was an outcast in high school, and that really shaped my social identity for a long time," she said. "What I understood in [Nessa] was the longing to be something other than what she was."

"Wicked" was Federer's first Broadway musical. She met the show's director, Joe Mantello, while appearing in "Man of Importance" at Lincoln Center in New York. Mantello invited her to try out for the role of Nessa.

"I auditioned four times in four months because [no one] really knew what they wanted to do with the character," Federer said. "They wanted someone to come in and embody the character. I had to convince them I could handle the pressure of a musical."

Federer proved herself worthy of the part, and she appeared in "Wicked" for more than three years. By the end of November 2005, the show was grossing more than $1.5 million a week. "Wicked" outran any other Gershwin Theater show, and Federer performed before more than 2.5 million viewers.

"It spoiled me for life," she said. "Mantello told me, 'Soak this up. It will never be like this again.' It was really exciting. The most common experience is to have a show close. I have an idealized view of what it was like to be on Broadway."

As Nessa, Federer had to learn to maneuver two different wheelchairs, a "backbreaking" task. It was part of the reason she ended up leaving "Wicked."

"I had been in it for three years. I felt I had done everything with that part that I could. I was physically worn out. I needed a new challenge. The great thing about 'Wicked' is it will be around for a very long time," Federer said. "It was a joy. It was hard to leave."

The original cast of "Wicked" included two actresses Federer calls "awesome": Kristin Chenoweth and Idina Menzel.

"Kristin was so quick in her development of the character, and her brain worked so fast," Federer said. "She came in and knew exactly what to do, and it was always right."

Working with Menzel was a different experience.

"Idina is so much more organic and was a mess in rehearsal. But you put her in costume and it all comes together," Federer said.

She is now working with Mantello on the play "Three Days of Rain." Federer is Julia Roberts' understudy.

Liz Kantor • The Shakerite

"I'm very excited to watch her work. I love the play," she said.

"Three Days of Rain" is "about families, children's perception of their parents' relationship," Federer said. "It's beautiful, funny, really smart, simple [and] very different from 'Wicked.' "

Despite her talent in musical theater, Federer enjoys doing plays more than musicals.

"[Plays are] all you need. I don't love to sing. It scares me," she said. "I enjoyed singing 'Wicked' because it is very character-driven . . . The characters in musicals are not as developed as in plays."

Although Federer now lives and works in New York, the lessons she learned here have stayed with her. She said her involvement in the Shaker Theater Department helped her form a close bond with the department chairman at the time, James Thornton.

"Mr. Thornton used to say the definition of Ensemble was egos defying egos to further the whole. I carry that with me because it reminds me that I am part of a bigger picture. It keeps me grounded and realistic. I use that in my relationships, in everything in life," she said.

CONNORS SUCCEEDS WITH TWO REEDS

BY SARAH WEISS AND CAITLIN NIELSEN
STAFF REPORTERS

What instrument could be described as nasal and wiry, but also as plaintive and melancholy? The answer is the oboe, which senior Chris Connors has played for eight years.

"I wanted an instrument that was unique and I really like the sound. Also, I wanted to step away from the Asian stereotype of string instruments and piano," said Connors, whom band director Tom Deep believes is one of the best oboe players in the state.

The oboe is a wind instrument in which a musician produces sound by blowing air through two small pieces of wood called reeds, which are placed back to back in the instrument's mouthpiece. Reeds are flexible strips that vibrate to produce sound. While some listeners compare the oboe's sound to that of a duck, it plays an important role in orchestras, and in Connors' hands, it's an instrument of beauty.

Elizabeth Camus, Connors' oboe teacher, described Connors as a "lovely natural musician. The problem is the oboe, which is a difficult instrument to play."

The challenge lies in maintaining pitch, a difficult task in reed instruments.

"The tone, if not careful, sounds nasal and brittle," Camus said.

The oboe is usually found most often in classical music, but it occasionally can be found in other genres. The rock band REM from Athens, Georgia, features the oboe in the song "Endgame."

Beyond the oboe, Connors has been involved with music for most of his life.

"My mom made me play piano when I was two or three," he said, adding that he also played the violin but quit after a week "because it was too screechy."

Connors also plays the English horn, which is in the same family as the oboe.

Deep believes that Connors is an excellent musical collaborator as well. "He is also a great musical leader in our ensemble," Deep said. Connors has been in Deep's Wind Ensemble, the most prestigious band at Shaker, for four years.

Most recently, Connors performed at the Ohio Music Education Association Solo and Ensemble Contest Feb. 11. Participants at the OMEA contest play for judges and are scored from one to five, with a rating of one being the best. Performers may also be judged on a comment-only basis if their song choice does not appear on the recommended list.

Connors participated in this year's competition by performing both a solo and an ensemble piece. The ensemble, whose members included Geoff Sanford, Ann Lesnefsky and Connors, all seniors, received a score of one. Connors' solo was a comment-only piece.

During the typical week he practices more than 20 hours, including rehearsals of orchestras he's involved in outside of school. These include chamber groups and the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra, which he's played with for three years.

Connors intends to play the oboe for the rest of his life and to major in oboe performance in college. He wants to go to a music conservatory after high school. His top choices are Eastman School of Music, Oberlin College, Temple University and the Peabody Institute.

His life plans include being part of an orchestra and "teaching on the side."

Because orchestra positions are so difficult to obtain, Deep "doesn't encourage anyone to enter as a performer [for an occupation]," but he believes Connors has the potential to succeed.

Jaclyn Inglis • The Shakerite

CHRIS CONNORS PRACTICES the oboe in the band room. The senior received the highest score (one) with his ensemble piece in the Ohio Music Education Association Solo and Ensemble Contest. Shaker Band director Tom Deep thinks Connors is "great musical leader."

UNDERGROUND CONCERT LIST

The Zero Boys, Nine Shocks Terror, The Sex Crimes – This is an all-star punk rock night of craziness. The Zero Boys are one of the original '80s punk/hardcore bands coming from the Midwest. One of the greatest bands from that era, their set should be a sweat-filled, raucous extravaganza. But don't come to the show late. The Sex Crimes, Cleveland's answer to the question of what happened to pop-punk, open the night with their catchy and fantastic tunes. And Nine Shocks Terror's shows never fail to impress; what can go wrong with exploding firecrackers, beer grenades and insane, hardcore energy? (April 15 at the Beachland Ballroom)

THE ZERO BOYS

TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS

Toots and the Maytals – Imagine the Elvis of Ska – that's The Toots and The Maytals. These three men from Jamaica started the music that has spanned four generations and taken on racism and the government. And even though they are pretty old, their sound is still one of the best. Playing all their classics, which have been covered countless times yet never done as well as the original, this band soaks the room with a dancey, happy exuberance. (April 16 at The House of Blues)

Horrorpops, The Briefs, Left Alone - Psychobilly. It's like your father's old rock 'n' roll albums mixed with punk rock. Upright bass and distorted guitars are really beautiful things. And nobody does it better than the Horrorpops. Featuring go-go dancers, an incredible girl lead singer and a band decked out in clothes from a '50s horror flick, they will keep your eyes, ears and feet mesmerized. Opening is my favorite band, the Briefs. Possibly the best punk band out there today, they sound a lot like the Buzzcocks and mix pop and punk into a beautifully awesome fury. (April 28 at the Cleveland Agora)

THE BRIEFS

Compiled by Josh Davidson

We are proud of Shaker's achieving students

NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALISTS

Ian Bardenstein
William Feldman
Morgan Grossman-McKee
Matthew Herzfeld
Braeden Kepner-Kraus
Lavinia Pavlish
Hazel Rigby
Ben Schnur
Allison Vitkus
Diana Wang

NATIONAL MERIT COMMENDED STUDENTS

Anderson Albano
Avi Bakshani
Halle Bauer
Nicolas Bethoux
Stephen Cabrera
Max Gardener
Rebecca Glazer
Emily Grannis
Brandon Hemmelgarn
Betsy Hogg
Alexander Hoover
Jason Immerman
David Kohn
Sarah Ledford
Dinah Lewis
Brittany Mosely
Amanda Murphy
Julia Shatten
Katherine Sommers
Shan Tie
Brian Weber

NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT SEMIFINALISTS

Nicole Feeling
Brittany Mosely
Corbin Sykes
Malik Wiggins

NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT COMMENDED STUDENTS

Kelly Jackson
Christopher Whatley

NATIONAL HISPANIC COMMENDED STUDENTS

Ian Bardenstein
Stephen Cabrera

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association

Dan Snider • The Shakerite

JUNIORS ALEXIS POUNDS tends to Gloria Burrel's hair during "Beauty Shop." The scene improvisational humor to convey the story of Ebony Magazine's founder.

'Shop' shows funny side

"In the Beauty Shop" is senior Ashley Williams' favorite scene. In this vignette, which delivered information about John Johnson, who founded Ebony Magazine in 1942, Victoria Boyd and others created a lighter mood after a Sankofa offered a somber look at African-American struggles through discrimination.

Junior Gloria Burrel also enjoyed the humor.

"I loved the beauty shop scene. They improvised some of the stuff, so it was great," Burrel said.

The scene featured customers and hair stylists who women at a beauty shop making fun of an African American young lady who was fraternizing with a Caucasian male. They laughed at her, calling her "chocolate" and her male friend "vanilla." He was the first African-American to appear on the Forbes 400 Rich List, and he had a fortune estimated at around $600 million.

Dan Snider • The Shakerite

SENIOR MAKEDA FARLEY performs her original poem "Back to Life." She described gang violence and racism as examples of modern slavery.

Poem targets new slavery

In the scene "Back to Life," senior Makeda Farley performed an original poem about current issues in the African-American community, such as gang violence, racism and internalized pain. She talked about slavery in the past and the psychological slavery that she feels African-Americans face today.

"[African-Americans] are not bonded by physical slavery anymore, but we still have this idea that we are inferior because of our skin color: psychological slavery," Farley said. "In my poem, I was trying to show the connection of history and present."

> Oh, my goodness! Every day we were here to at least six o'clock.
>
> Gloria Burrel • junior Sankofa participant

Dan Snider • The Shakerite

SANKOFA PARTICIPANTS PERFORM "Harlem Hell-Fighters," which portrayed discrimination experienced by an African-American regiment after World War I.

Hard work ensures Sankofa success

BY AMANDA ORR
LIMELIGHT ASSISTANT EDITOR

Audience members waited in line 40 minutes before the beginning of Sankofa this year, and the auditorium quickly filled with excited viewers.

"[The large audience] was exciting and it really encouraged us to perform like we never had before," senior Sade Sparks said.

Sparks has been dancing for five years, participates in the school dance team and dances at church. Dancing is important to her, and she called it her sport.

"It's a way to express what I feel," Sparks said.

Sparks was a dance leader, along with senior Ashley Williams, for this year's Sankofa production. They both choreographed dances for the performance. While Williams danced impressively in her interpretation of "Strange Fruit," Sparks is proud of her choreography of the scene "Harlem Hell-Fighters," in which students performed an impressively complex step/drill routine. Sparks relied on experience to choreograph it.

"That was all me. I was on the drill team in my earlier years. I wrote one of the original step routines, and the dancers knew another routine already, so we used both of them," Sparks said. "It wasn't difficult [be a dance leader] because we were all in our own element."

Long rehearsals perfected the routines and tested the participants' dedication.

"Oh, my goodness! Every day we were here to at least six o'clock," junior Gloria Burrel said. "We even came in on Saturdays and Sundays, too."

Sankofa experienced new leadership this year as art teacher Keaf Holliday and social studies teacher Roy Isaacs took the helm. Holliday used his talents with computers by creating a slideshow that ran parallel to the performance, and Isaacs sang in the scene "Exodus," in addition to providing percussion for a number of other scenes.

"They did well for their first year. I really liked how they incorporated their own talents," Sparks said.

The student body saw selected scenes during the second period assemblies Feb. 24, and at the performance that night, donations were accepted for junior Marcel Jeffries, who has cancer. Junior Laurice Shelven remembered Jefferies' performance last year in Sankofa.

"No one knew he could sing, but once he starting singing, he was amazing. He sang 'A Change is Going to Come,' and it was so special because you could hear in his voice how powerful the song was to him. He was so excited to be a part of Sankofa this year, but chemo was rough," Shelven said. The Sankofa effort raised more than $500 for him.

Sankofa was an emotional experience for some of the seniors who have participated throughout their high school careers. Senior April Griffin recalled her last Sankofa as a touching experience.

"I'm upset. Coming towards the last scenes of the show, the seniors cried backstage and hugged each other. Sankofa will always be close to my heart," Griffin said.

Dan Snider • The Shakerite

HISTORY TEACHER ROY Isaacs performs Bob Marley's "Crazy Baldheads." The "Exodus" scene showed Bob Marley's power through song.

Marley's actions inspire

In the scene "Exodus," Roy Isaacs performed as Bob Marley and sang Marley's song "Crazy Baldheads." Marley was the first Jamaican artist to achieve international stardom. His songs gave a voice to the struggles of impoverished and oppressed Jamaicans. They focused on revolution, faith and devotion and created a legacy that lives on through artists influenced by his music.

"I love Mr. Isaacs. He did his thing. It was amazing how he connected with the audience. It's great to see a teacher in that role," senior April Griffin said.

In 1976, two days before a scheduled free concert called "Smile Jamaica," Marley, his wife, Rita, and manager, Don Taylor, were shot inside the Marley home. Marley received minor injuries, while Don Taylor and Rita were seriously injured. It is believed that the shooting was politically motivated because the concert was in support of Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley. Despite his injuries and the threat to his life, Marley performed at "Smile Jamaica."

Compiled By Amanda Orr

heard in the halls

"This class has been reduced to producing cheap pornography."
2/29/06

"I drunk some Nyquil."
2/19/06

"Can you make a jacket with hydraulics?"
2/18/06

"You bring the turkey, I'll bring the brownies."
2/22/06

"It's not like I go into your room and watch you undress . . . like some people."
2/16/06

"Are those wintergreen-flavored tennis shoes?"
2/16/06

Bonkers for bumper stickers

• Cars provide popular palette for personality promotion

BY MIRIAM MOORE
THE BEAT EDITOR

'Against Gay Marriage? Amend your mind, not the Constitution.' So states a bumper sticker on senior Sarah Ledford's car.

Ledford pulls up to the oval every day in her 2000 Honda Civic, which displays a unique collection of bumper stickers. She uses the adhesive messages to express herself and to distinguish her car from others. "It personalizes the car and makes it easier to find," Ledford said.

Starting with the 'Smith' sticker that touts the name of a sunglasses company, Ledford began adding more stickers to make her car different from everybody else's. Ledford publicizes her musical tastes (with an Ok Go sticker) and shows her school spirit (with a Shaker women's crew sticker) and broadcasts her political views -- her "Amend your mind" sticker showcases Ledford's belief in the legalization of gay marriage.

Against Gay Marriage?
AMEND YOUR MIND
Not the Constitution!
www.AmendYourMind.com

"It's something that I feel strongly about. I'm advertising my opinion," Ledford said.

Ledford is not alone in the political sticker game. Senior Aaron Gobidas' Jeep displays four bumper stickers that demonstrate his Catholic values. "I'm pro-life, but I'm not an insane fanatic that protests or anything," Gobidas said. Gobidas feels most strongly about a sticker that he obtained at a Catholic youth festival. It reads, "You can't be Christian and pro-abortion." He believes that a fetus is a baby and that women should seek alternatives to abortion.

While not a political-bumper-sticker-owner herself, junior Laura Stern enjoys reading the political bumper stickers found on cars parked around the oval. Stern, whose Honda Accord boasts multiple lacrosse stickers and a Ron Jon Surf Shop sticker among many others, would like to affix a funny political sticker to her vehicle. "They really show someone's personality," Stern said.

Not everyone has politics on the brain -- or the bumper. Other students want to show a little more rock 'n' roll.

Senior Max Gardner's bumper stickers on his Toyota Tercel depict his musical interests. His three bumper stickers -- collected at concerts -- honor Robert Randolph, Wesley Willis and Fu Manchu. These artists show Gardner's love for rock, soul and funk. "I like my stoner rock," Gardner joked when describing his musical tastes.

Gardner receives questions now and then about what his stickers mean, but not as often as senior Laura Bartholomae does. The letters EVL that grace the back of Bartholomae's Honda Civic are commonly mistaken for a more sinister word.

"It doesn't stand for evil!" Bartholomae clarified as she explained how students ask her what it means. "It stands for Ellicottville, New York, where I snowboard." Other than her commonly misunderstood bumper sticker, she has another bumper sticker that shows her passion for snowboarding at Whistler Ski Resort in Canada.

Students are not the only school people having bumper sticker fun.

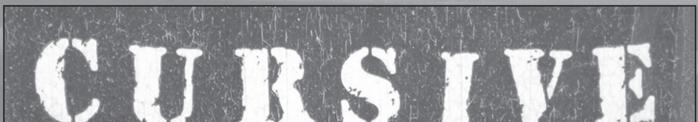
English teacher Carole Kovach was known for her infamously covered '92 red Volkswagen Fox. With stickers ranging from 'Conjunction Junction, What's your function?' to 'South African Rugby,' Kovach's car was a collage depicting her music, travel and other interests. "They are an expression of myself," Kovach said. However, she gave up her sticker-covered car when she bought a new car last spring. While her much-loved Fox is missed, her new red Volkswagen is not barren. Kovach chose the sticker 'SHHS' sold by the 2008 Student Council as the first sticker for her new car.

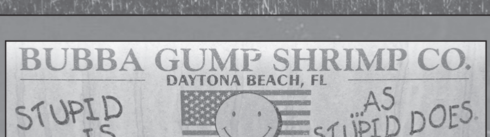
Sophomore Viveca Tress, a member of Class of 2008 Student Council, hopes that the number of bumper stickers on cars will increase. Tress, along with her fellow Student Council members, are selling red and white, oval-shaped "SHHS" bumper stickers for $2. After creating them at makestickers.com, council members hope to raise money for the Class of 2008 by selling the stickers to students, teachers and community members. Although they ambitiously bought 1,000 stickers from the website, sales have been slow.

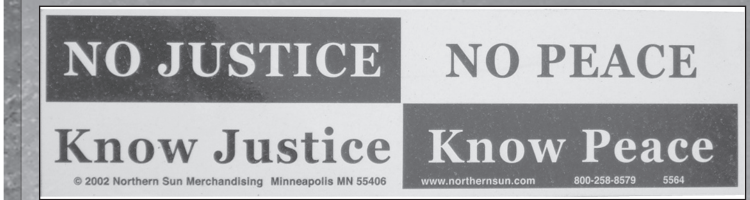
"We've only sold about 300 and we finally just broke even," Tress said.

For students such as Gobidas, stickers are essential. "Everyone should have at least one. They are fun to read and an expression of yourself," he said.

FOUND IN THE TEACHERS' LOT







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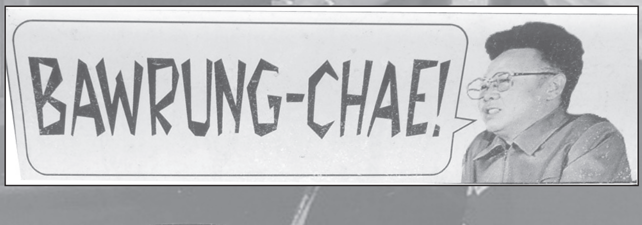
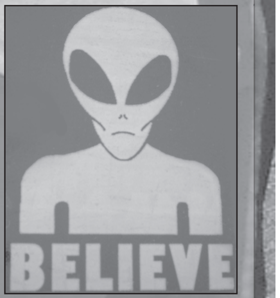
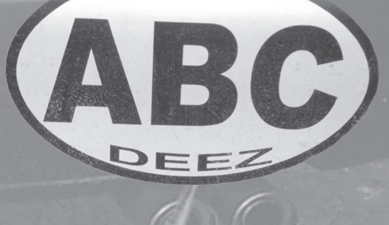
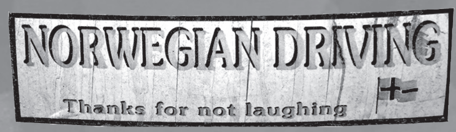
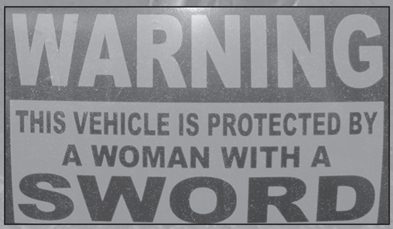
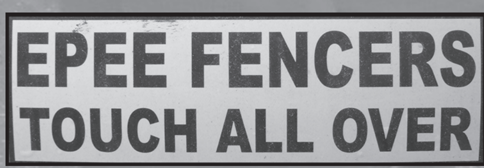












SAY GOODBYE TO SNICKERS AND SNACKS

• Administration puts stop to candy fundraisers

BY JASON OSCAR
STAFF REPORTER

The coast is clear. A student slips a crumpled bill into the hand of a classmate and waits until the sweet transaction is complete. He looks down, grins at his secret score and quickly shoves it into his pocket before anyone sees.

Sounds a lot like a drug deal. But it's actually what many students do to buy candy from their friends during school. Although technically selling candy at school is against the rules, athletic teams have raised money for years by dealing chocolate in the halls. As the candy market grew, individual students got in on the action, too -- selling candy, or "wrappers," as one vendor called them, on their own.

One of these candy dealers is sophomore Hartley Brody. "I started the week before finals . . . because I was running short on money. I used to mow lawns in the summer, but since you can't do that in the winter I decided to sell candy," Brody said.

Brody has been very successful since then, making hundreds of dollars. His candy profit margin hovers around 50 percent after taking out the cost of the candy he buys from a warehouse on the West side. "It depends on how much I buy," he said. "Last batch I made $80 profit after I spent $90 on the candy."

Other students are also selling candy, but for a different purpose: to raise money for clubs and sports. Junior Carrie Coverdale said she sold 432 Malley's chocolate bars at $1 apiece.

"[The crew team] is trying to raise money for trips to more regattas and a new erg [rowing machine]," Coverdale said.

Coverdale doesn't oppose individual candy vendors. "I think a lot of people just saw how much money other people were making by selling candy and started doing it themselves," she said.

Athletic Director David Sedmak said he is unaware of any written rules regarding candy sales for clubs or individuals. "[The administration] never wanted anybody to sell candy because it is a disruption in class, but they let it go because teams need a way to raise money," Sedmak said. "Individuals selling candy would be looked at differently [by the administration], but it's probably not a huge problem."

However, a new rule that will set to take effect next year will ban all sale of candy in the school, including for fund raising.

This rule was made to conform to Shaker's Wellness Program for schools, established to conform to a federal mandate. Camelia Sutorius, Onaway nurse and member of both the high school and district health councils, said the idea of this new rule is to "make a variety of efforts to promote nutrition for the students. One of these efforts is to have fund raisers without candy."

Sutorius said the selling of candy is a distraction to students that also prevents them from having money to buy lunch.

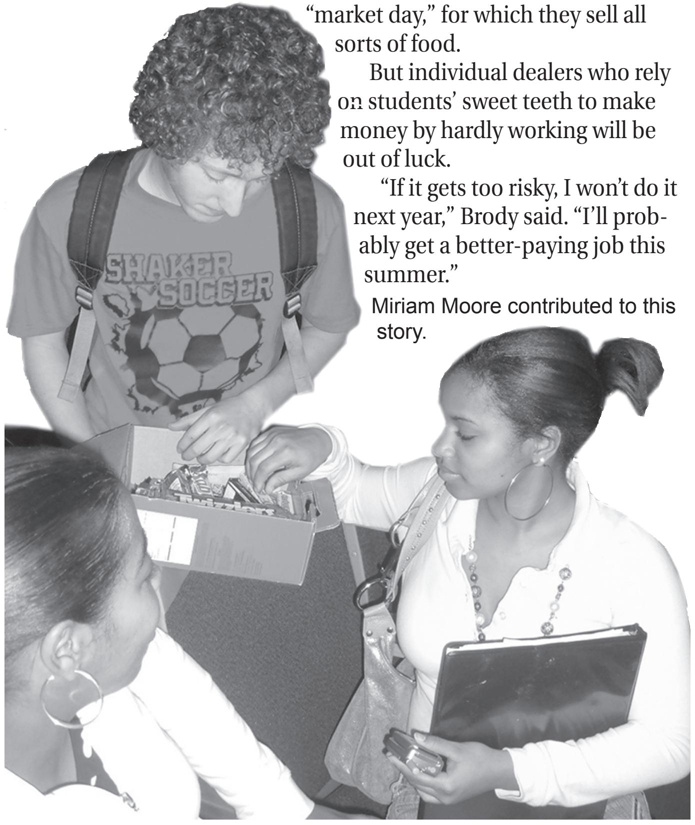
Next year, hungry students who can't live without their daily pick-me-up will have to settle for candy from the cafeteria vending machine, which is cheaper than the $1 price tag of fund-raiser candy but lacks the options of the fund-raising variety packs. The rule presents a problem for some clubs and sports that rely on candy sales to get the extra bucks they need for special trips and equipment.

Coverdale said the crew team will hold more ergathons or fund raisers of that type. (During an ergathon, rowers sign sponsors and row in shifts for 24 hours). The team also will rely on its biggest fund raiser, "market day," for which they sell all sorts of food.

But individual dealers who rely on students' sweet teeth to make money by hardly working will be out of luck.

"If it gets too risky, I won't do it next year," Brody said. "I'll probably get a better-paying job this summer."

Miriam Moore contributed to this story.



Miriam Moore • The Shakerite
JUNIOR BEN WEINBERGER sells candy for diving after the Takatori assembly.

Government OKs mustang slaughter

KATE GUESS

The word mustang is derived from the Spanish "mesteño," meaning, "untamed." The mustang's feral and uncultivated personality has been the inspiration for cars (The Ford Mustang), sports teams (The Denver Broncos and SMU Mustangs).

To many, these wild horses embody the rugged individualism, strength, pride and endurance of the American people. The wild mustang is a living tribute to the glory of the Wild West and the American spirit.

So I was shocked when the Senate revoked the Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act in December 2004. Senator Conrad Burns (R-Montana) was correct to assume that his fellow senators, eager to start their vacation, would not take time to read the 4,000-page federal budget word for word before signing, thus revoking the law.

As a former equestrian champion and lifelong horse lover, I didn't understand how my government could allow the murder of an American symbol – and murder is indeed what followed.

Horses are sold at auctions to "killer buyers," or buyers hired by the slaughterhouse to bring in new shipments. The equines are packed like sardines into a trailer, most of them unhealthy or suffering from dehydration or starvation. We would hope that someone would stop to feed and water the horses, but it doesn't happen.

The official slaughter procedure includes a term called "humane euthanasia." The alleged humane form of euthanasia involves stunning a horse by means of a stun gun (a spike that is driven into the skull) or knocking it over the head with a hammer. The horses are still alive when workers shackle their hind legs and hang them, then proceed to slit their bellies or skin them. A recent study conducted by The Washington Post revealed that some horses are still conscious when they are shackled and killed.

Under the current law, a mustang or burro can be bought and slaughtered by a private investor under the guise of controlling the mustang population problem. According to the Department of the Interior, only 184 herds of mustang remain, numbers that fall below populations statistically guaranteed genetic survival. Contrary to the belief of Sen. Burns, the wild horse populations are not a threat to ecosystems or farmland in the West.

According to the National Academy of Sciences, in order for a species to qualify for emergency population control, annual growth must meet or exceed 20 percent. Current wild horse and burro population growth is only at 10 percent. This emergency removal costs more than $39 million in taxes; 22,000 wild horses are currently in government holding pens, 8,500 of which are guaranteed immediate slaughter.

As a person who knew a horse like family, not as a pet, the very idea is disturbing. No animal should have to die like that. Our wild horses have helped define American character and identity simply by existing. The spirit of the West is harbored in the mustang, one of the last legends of America. As Americans, we have to keep that legend safe.

Immigrants rock stage, scour hallways for singer

• With international inspiration and aspirations, this freshman band seeks full-time voice and deal

Courtsey of Joel Zarders

IMMIGRANTS MEMBERS CHRIS Seaman and Charlie Milter rehearse. The band is slated to play its first gig at Shaker Middle School sometime in the next month.

BY NATE MAUND
STAFF REPORTER

Joel Zarders and the Immigrants won't let a joker stop the music.

Founder of a rock band known as the Immigrants, Zarders, along with his Shaker band mates, were searching for a lead singer to complete their new group last November. So they posted signs around the high school and waited.

One person responded.

"But I think it was a prank call," said Zarders, guitarist and lyricist for the Immigrants, who take their rock 'n' roll cues from the likes of Pink Floyd and the Ramones.

The Immigrants still do not have an official singer, but that hasn't stopped them from jamming. Shaker Middle School student Maddie Williams has been handling the vocals. After several rehearsals with Williams, the band is undecided whether to officially make her their singer.

Zarders met Leopold Seckendors (drums), Chris Seaman (bass) and Lance Niel (keyboards) last year at the middle school. Seckendors, Seaman and Niel played in the jazz band there. After Seckendors and Niel got to know each other, Seckendors introduced the latter to Zarders. Seaman was added to the mix, and they've been playing together since.

Since then, the group has added freshman Charlie Milter to the band as the lead guitarist.

"[We wanted] to have something to do and make some money," Zarders said.

For many bands, choosing a name proves one of the hardest challenges. But deciding on a moniker was easy for this group, named the Immigrants for its members' international backgrounds and moves to America. Zarders comes from Sweden, where he and his family lived for six years. Niel's mother lived in France until 1985, and she met Niel's American father in Germany. Seckendors lived in Germany with his family for 10 years before moving to the United States with his mother and sister. Seaman is half-Australian; his mother came to America when she got a scholarship from Cleveland State University.

Given their ages -- Zarders is 14 and the others are all 13 -- some might assume that the members of the group are fairly new to their instruments. But the Immigrants have significant experience.

"I've been playing bass for four years," Seaman said.

"I think [I've been playing] since I was 4 or 5," said Seckendors.

Niel has been taking piano lessons for seven years. With only about a year of guitar playing under his belt, Zarders is the relative novice of the group.

The Immigrants are currently slotted to play their first gig at Shaker Middle School at a concert being organized by the guitar club there. The event should take place within a month. Although they haven't played out before, the band has high hopes.

"We're trying to get a record contract," said Zarders. "My dad's a music producer."

Zarders' dad Kevin Zarders has worked for EMI and Gessem and is starting his own label, Z Pop Records. Niel mentioned that the band hopes to record a demo in Kevin Zarders' mini-studio. They have about 20 songs written (or nearly complete) so far.

To achieve their dream, the Immigrants may eventually find themselves returning to family homelands.

"[Since] there are so many bands in the U.S., it's hard to get a break," Niel explained. "We might try to take it internationally to Europe or Asia."

THE BAND by the #'s

4 members (and a singer)

20 songs written so far

9TH grade musicians are in

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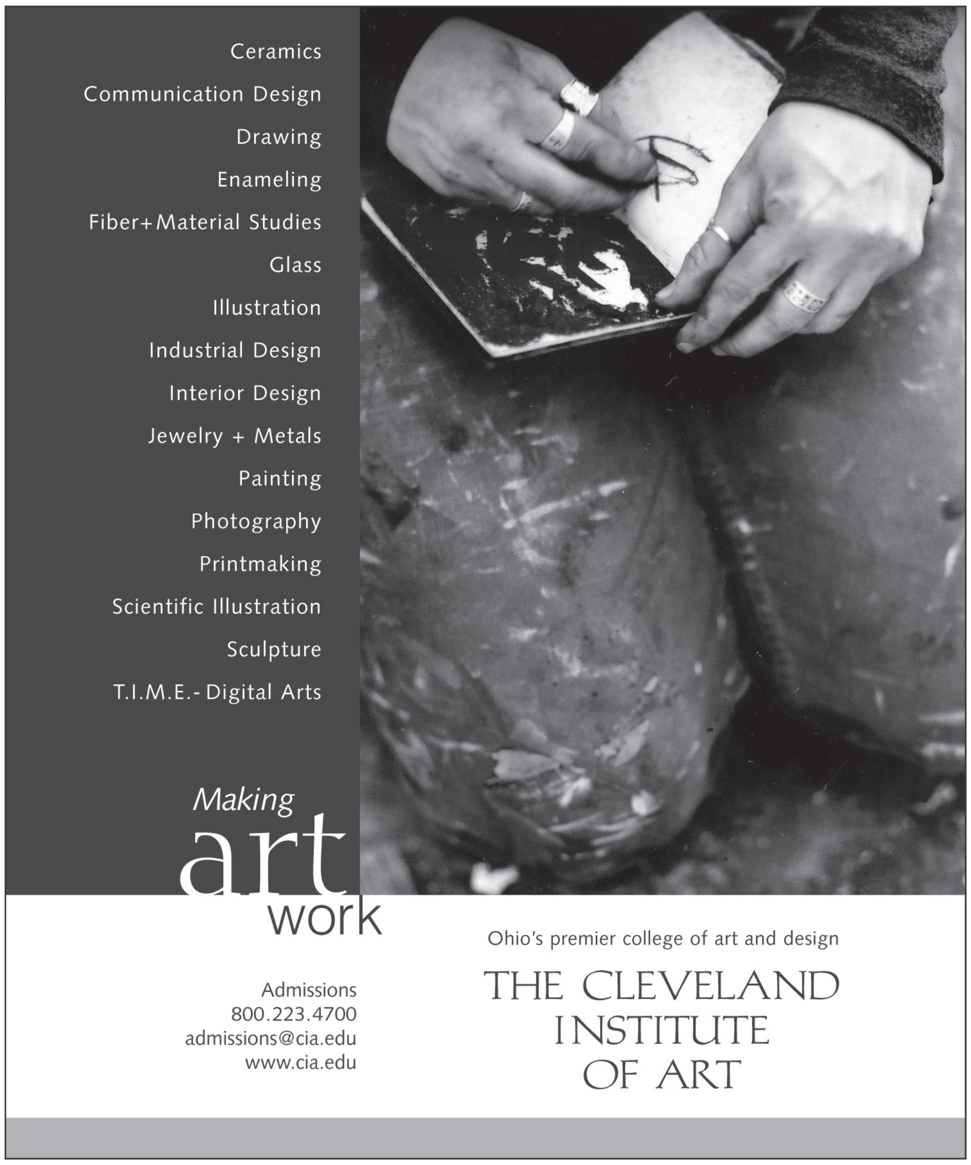

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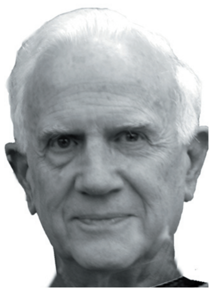
GEOTHERMAL HEAT TO THE RESCUE!

• Retired engineer Dan Hoffman wants the Board of Education to get into some hot water

BY KATE GUESS
THE BEAT EDITOR

The Romans and Native Americans warmed themselves with geothermal energy when they enjoyed hot springs. And now, Dan Hoffman wants geothermal energy to warm Shaker's school buildings.

Geothermal heating is the process of pumping naturally hot water from deep inside the earth to just below the surface, where its used to create a natural and efficient heating system. Hoffman believes it's time for Shaker to join the craze.


Hoffman

"Two years ago, annual gas prices for the school district were $495,000. Now, they're $1,350,000," said Hoffman, a retired engineer and Shaker resident. "As gas prices begin to soar, it begins to become more and more feasible."

Anyone who has attended a Board of Education meeting in recent years has likely heard Hoffman persistently press board members and Superintendent Mark Freeman to pursue the earth's hot-water heating system for district buildings.

He hasn't let the Board's less than enthusiastic response put the damper on his crusade, however.

Much of the school board's concern, however, does not rest with the performance of geothermal heating, but rather the cost of retrofitting the district's aging buildings with a new system. Geothermal heating consultants have told the school board that it is not financially advisable to install geothermal heating systems in the schools.

Hoffman has a solution to that, too.

"The money you save heating the building with the earth extends the payoff," he said, explaining that not having to pay for natural gas at the going rate would pay for the cost of a switch.

But the consultants aren't totally off base, and Hoffman recognizes the problems posed by installing new heating systems in old facilities.

"Putting geothermal in new buildings is effective and efficient," he said. But with old buildings, like most of the school buildings, installing geothermal requires renovation, which is very expensive."

If reality dictates that Shaker can't quit the natural gas heating habit, Hoffman believes that much of the financial woes the city has been experiencing can be solved through exploitation of Shaker's natural gas deposits.

"Three weeks ago, the drills at the [Shaker] country club hit gas at 3,200 feet," he said. "The gas companies pay for the gas on whatever property the gas was found on. That's free gas. The . . . layer of sandstone underneath Shaker is full of gas, and drillers will put money up front."

But problems exist with this energy plan as well.

"The down side of drilling is that it causes a noisy ruckus 24 hours a day, and the neighbors scream to high heaven. But if it was presented properly -- presented as a money-saving process -- it might be more acceptable," Hoffman said.

He believes that the schools should drill for natural gas on their own property. "If they drilled and struck, money would be saved. The problem with the Board is that they're nearsighted and don't have the same access to research that Dr. Freeman has," he said.

Freeman thought that Hoffman might be referring to a letter sent to the Board by Karpinski Engineering. The letter detailed the estimated costs of converting to geothermal energy. The letter states that "the installation of a geothermal system would require the unnecessary removal of existing operational heating systems. This adds unnecessary costs to a project . . . the cost savings of a smaller mechanical space does not apply since the mechanical space already exists."

The district has over time been replacing windows building by building, which, according to Hoffman, is a "Band-aid" solution to high energy costs. (Hoffman is also known to describe such strategies as "rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.") But, according to District Director of Communications Peggy Caldwell, the Board has considered and is considering some of Hoffman's ideas.

"We've been talking to gas well people. We took a second look at geothermal, but it's not economically feasible," Caldwell said.

Hoffman said he appreciated the district's pursuit of his suggestion.

"The priorities were backward, but at least now they have investigated it," he said.

Robert Sylak, who teaches environmental science and is adviser to the high school's Environmental Club, is a fan of geothermal heating on the home front. He had a geothermal system installed in his house three years ago.

"It's a pretty simple system -- taking heat from one place and adding it to another," Sylak said, adding that his system comprises three 150-foot wells spaced 10 feet apart.

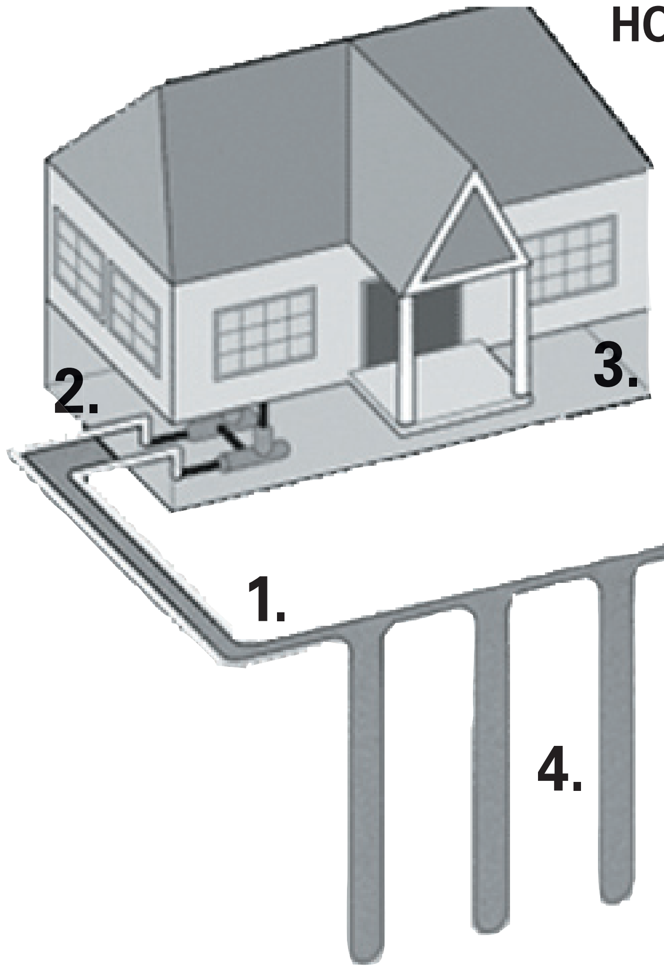
"My water furnace removes heat from the 55 degree water, which is pumped into my house. I take 33 units of energy of concentrated heat and throw it into my house. The water goes back down at 20 degrees," he said. "There's antifreeze in there, so it doesn't freeze. It takes maybe 10 gallons of water to run the whole thing. I've never had to pay more than $100 for my heat."

Regardless of their different views about hot-water heating, Freda Levenson believes that Hoffman has the best intentions at heart.

GEOTHERMAL HEAT by the #'s

1903	the year geothermal heat was first used to generate energy in Italy
50	percent of heating costs can be saved by using geothermal energy
5	percent of California's total generated electricity came from geothermal sources in 2001
400	square meters of land is needed to produce power over 30 years

HOW GEOTHERMAL HEAT WORKS



1. 55 F DEGREE WATER IS DRAWN UP AND PUMPED INTO THE HOUSE.

2. THE WATER GOES THROUGH A COMPRESSOR, USUALLY IN THE BASEMENT, AND THE COMPRESSOR SUPER-HEATS THE WATER.

3. THE HOT WATER IS PUMPED THROUGH THE HOUSE BY A SYSTEM OF PIPES SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR GEOTHERMAL HEAT.

4. THE WATER TRAVELS BACK DOWN THE PIPES TO RETURN TO 55 DEGREES, AND THE PROCESS STARTS AGAIN.

Compiled by Kate Guess

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Striving to serve more success

BY MIKE YOUNG
RAIDER ZONE EDITOR

Members of the men's tennis team believe this season will end the same as 17 of the last 18 years.

With another LEL title. History demands it.

The pressure to win another one this year is nonexistent, however. "There's not really any pressure," senior Andy Harding said. "We can expect it ourselves . . . We're consistently the best in the LEL and one of the best [teams] in the area."

It's a sentiment that's echoed by head coach Allan Slawson. "We expect it and we plan on it," he said.

Slawson has been head coach for both the men's and women's teams since 1982. Slawson has won 18 LEL titles with the women's team and 23 with the men in Slawson's 26 seasons as head coach. But winning number 24 isn't the biggest challenge. "The league isn't as big a challenge as other things we're trying to accomplish," Slawson said.

HARDING

Those other things include ranking among the area elite and qualifying for the state finals.

"We have a great chance of getting to states. There's not as many teams this year with depth," junior Jeremy Polster said.

Among the area's top teams are Hudson and University School, according to Polster. "If we play at our best, we can give Hudson and other teams a run for their money," he said. Although Polster is confident Shaker can advance to the state playoffs, he said that Cleveland Heights poses the biggest challenge in the LEL, as they have in the past.

Beyond building a strong team, the tennis team hopes to live up to the performances of the two doubles pairs of Ryan Eckstein and Justin Greenlee and Adam Margolius and Matt Khanna, all of whom graduated last year. "We've got a young team but, hopefully, our seniors will step in for their absences," senior Maurice Rucker said.

Intense training is one reason Shaker has been able to sustain tennis success. Players attribute their success to the physically demanding training regimen they go through before the season starts. "We do a lot of sprinting, footwork and lateral motion," Harding said. "It gets really stressful physically."

Slawson also identifies the popularity of tennis within the community as another reason for Shaker's sustained success.

"There are young players who start at camps at the high school and Thornton and who play rec league," Slawson said. "Plus, with a fairly affluent community, as Shaker is, tennis is more likely to be good."

There's no reason why the success should stop soon. Senior leadership has helped those new to the tennis program.

"While playing varsity matches, the seniors I was playing with were good leaders," sophomore Greg Woyczynski said.

The young talent in the Shaker community should also contribute to future tennis success. "It should continue for quite a long time," Harding said. "There are a couple of good players who will be freshmen in a couple years, and we've always had a good program."

The men's tennis season began with a March 28 home match against Kenston.

Trapped indoors

Dan Snider • The Shakerite

VARSITY SOFTBALL PLAYERS practice inside the North Gym. In the often hostile weather conditions of Northeast Ohio, spring teams are forced inside, where they often find themselves in the halls and in the way. Shaker lacks a dedicated athletic facility for indoor workouts, so until the weather breaks, athletes and others keep a wary eye open after school.

• Athletes forced to find alternative exercise areas due to lack of space

BY MIRIAM MOORE AND DAVID O'CONNELL
THE BEAT AND RAIDER ZONE EDITORS

The life of a spring athlete in Northeast Ohio leaves much to be desired.

With icy sidewalks and soggy athletic fields – not to mention the occasional late April snow storm – getting ready to compete outdoors poses lots of challenges. It's not unusual for athletes during to find alternate areas for preseason conditioning, and for Shaker athletes, training in the halls has become a painful tradition.

"We practice wherever we can find a spot, usually in the basement," senior track athlete Brittany Mosely said. "Floors are made for walking, not running. The pounding of running on the hard floor is bad on your legs," she said.

In comparison to other schools, Shaker is behind in the field of sports facilities.

"We're one of the few [schools] that doesn't have a facility . . . Solon, Westlake, Mayfield and Beachwood all have facilities," strength and conditioning coach Mark Hoskins said.

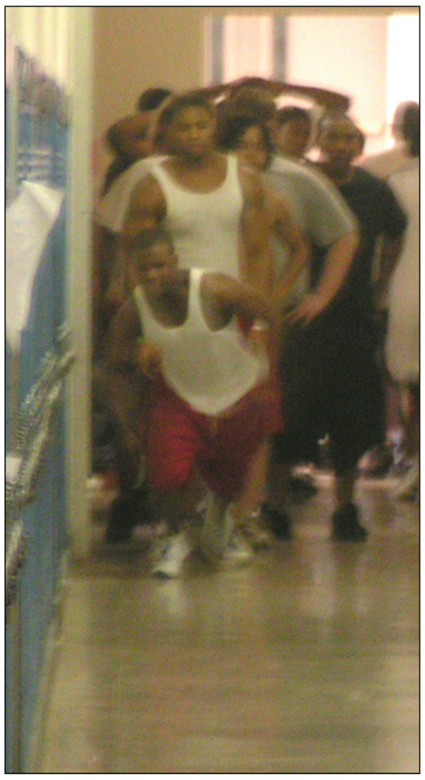
Hoskins runs Shaker's Bigger Faster Stronger program, including Big Red workouts that involve cardiovascular exercises. Hoskins believes a training facility would create more efficient Big Red sessions.

"I'd like to have [a facility] because it's an attainable goal for Shaker," he said. "By moving the Big Reds from where they are now, it prevents overcrowding, creates a wiser use of resources and it avoids students running into each other in the halls."

In the spring, pre-season practice usually involves using school buildings and vacant gyms as alternatives to track and field turf.

"There's no place for us to improve," senior track runner Jibi Gueye said. "We don't have indoor track or anywhere else to practice. It doesn't give us that feel of the season."

Senior track runner David Turner believes having to train indoors discourages people from trying out for the team. "An indoor track would make practice a lot easier. We would have a lot more people trying out for track," Turner said.



Dan Snider • The Shakerite

RUNNING IN THE halls, junior Kevin Zackery starts his stride as athletes watch. Big Reds, workouts run by strength and conditioning coach Mark Hoskins, use the school's halls due to limited exercise area.

With the basketball teams occupying the gym and the wrestling team working out in the multipurpose room, spring teams have to find facilities estranged from the oval. The men's and women's lacrosse teams split time in the Woodbury gym during winter weather.

Women's varsity lacrosse coach Chantal Ayers believes even an outdoor practice facility with artificial turf would benefit athletes.

"Ideally, a turf field would be an ideal solution because it can be plowed and played on year round," Ayers said.

Ayers believes the dilemma with playing indoors is that the team can't work on transition due to limited playing area; lacrosse balls often ricochet off walls and hit athletes.

Practices in gymnasiums also leave little room for teams to train in settings relevant to their sport. Sophomore Dean Pohlman believes limited space sets teams back.

"You don't have sufficient space to set up a realistic lacrosse game situation, and other teams with turf and indoor fields have an edge on us," Pohlman said.

The crew team, which holds its normal practices at the downtown boathouse, must also flee to the gym during the winter season. The team uses 12 rowing machines located in the South Gym.

"The poor crew team has no place to go," Athletic Director Dave Sedmak said.

According to Sedmak, locations that could be devoted to a complex include middle school area and Thornton Park.

Athletic Director Susan Brown sees a community recreational center as a possibility.

"There might be an opportunity to have a recreational center over a field house," Brown said. "I would love to have both. To have an indoor track, indoor artificial grass and volleyball courts . . . It could be used by the high school."

According to Brown, there have been requests for an intramural program at the school that would include a variety of sports. But the issue of space has restricted intramural activity.

"We don't have intramurals because we don't have the space," she said. "That could be another possibility if there was a rec center."

A NEW LOOK AT RAIDERS ON ICE

BY TEDDY CAHILL
STAFF REPORTER

A blade scrapes the Thornton Park ice, which is adorned with Shaker hockey logos.

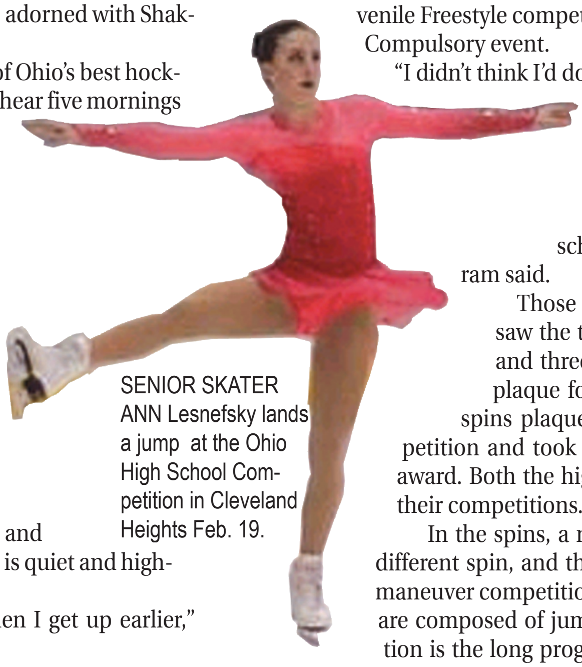
Not an unusual sound at a rink that hosts one of Ohio's best hockey programs. But the athletes who hear this sound hear five mornings a week are skating for a quieter-but no less competitive-reason.

It may come as a jolt to many students when they hear Shaker has a figure skating team. But for team members, skating plays a significant role in their lives.

They get up at 5 a.m. most mornings and trudge to Thornton Park, where they practice in the cold silence of the ice rink on a winter's morning.

"It's pretty hard [to get up early], but I try to get my homework done as soon as I can," freshman skater Amy Wargo said.

A skating practice is nothing like a hockey practice where a couple dozen sweaty guys skate and grunt their way around the rink. A skating practice is quiet and highly individualized.


SENIOR SKATER ANN Lesnefsky lands a jump at the Ohio High School Competition in Cleveland Heights Feb. 19.

"It's a lot easier to concentrate on skating when I get up earlier," said Stacy Feeling, a freshman skater.

Anywhere from a couple times a year to almost once a month, Shaker's figure skaters take their programs to competition. More hectic than the average practice, competitions are full of skaters, parents and coaches who try desperately to control their young skaters. The only fans the skaters usually see are their parents and fellow competitors from the same club.

This was not the case when Shaker competed at the Ohio High School Competition at Pavilion Skating Rink in Cleveland Heights Feb. 19.

"It was so cool [to have fans at the competition]. Lots of people came and cheered us on," Wargo said.

Some students were surprised by what they saw at the competition. "I didn't know that skating was that intense," said freshman Alyssa Taylor, who attended the competition.

Wargo wasn't feeling well on the day of the competition. Still, Wargo's maneuver team finished first, and she finished second in Pre-juvenile Freestyle competition and third in the Pre-juvenile Compulsory event.

"I didn't think I'd do that well because I was sick," she said.

Junior Steven Aviram felt similar to his teammate about the support from students.

"It was nice to have so much school spirit and kids cheering," Aviram said.

Those who took the trip out to Pavilion saw the team of four high school students and three middle school students win the plaque for maneuver team and tie for the spins plaque. They won the high spins competition and took third in the low spins to win the award. Both the high and low maneuver teams won their competitions.

In the spins, a member of each team performs a different spin, and the best combined score wins. The maneuver competition is very similar, but the elements are composed of jumps and spins. Freestyle competition is the long program for skaters and is performed to music. Compulsory events are the short program and are performed without music.

"They were clearly the best team out there [in maneuver and spin competition]," the skating team's adviser, Lori White, said.

Aviram helped the high maneuver team to the win with superb skating.

"Steven's double axel and flying sit spin were just amazing," White said.

Shaker has been participating in this competition since 2003 and won the overall team competition that year.

This is the only competition held in the area for the high school teams and the team does not plan to travel anymore this year. So for Shaker's skaters, life will return to normal, with quiet, early morning practices.

Hockey season reflects strength of schedule

out of bounds

Welcome, sports fans. "Out of bounds," a commentary column covering all things sports, debuts today. We will offer our take on just about anything athletic happening in Shaker, local and national high schools, colleges and professional sports leagues.

SHAKER HOCKEY

Despite what fans may perceive as a lackluster season for the Shaker hockey team, keep this in mind: the Red North is the toughest division in Ohio. Two of the four teams that made the "Frozen Four," the state finals, are Red North members (University School and Padua). The top two finishers in the Red North lost earlier; St. Edward lost in the district final and Lake Catholic in the district semifinal. It was disappointing to see Shaker hockey compile an 8-12-2 record, but the competition was the best in Ohio.

HOCKEY PART TWO

What is up with the defending state champs and second place finisher in the Red North, St. Ed's? We here at Raider Zone were expecting them to go back to back with state titles. But, alas, they didn't, even though they had almost everyone returning from the state-championship team that beat our own Raiders last year.

MARCEL CLOPTON

Cheers to Clopton, a junior wrestler who finished second at states in his 135-lb. weight class. But, by default, Clopton finished second because of his injured knee. It's sad to see that. Here's hoping he can attain the glory he missed by going back to states his senior year.

MIKE YOUNG

DAVID O'CONNELL

CLEVELAND.COM FORUMS

Here's something we just noticed. Why does Cleveland.com have a forum dedicated to "Pep & Band"? We love our Shaker band and the camaraderie they build with the football squad by playing the alma mater while the team sings after a win. But is anything interesting enough to post a thread about high school bands on the high school sports forums? We think not. On a side note, it does have more threads than the soccer forums.

THE BROWNS AND NATE CLEMENTS

The Browns added local talent over the off-season – center LeCharles Bentley from St. Ignatius, receiver Joe Jurevicius from Lake Catholic and punter Dave Zastudil from Bay Village. It's good to see the Browns are picking up homegrown talent, but where's Shaker's representation? We were hoping to see Shaker alum Nate Clements in a Browns uniform -- he was a free agent. But those hopes were put to rest when the Buffalo Bills, his current team, put the "Franchise Tag" on Clements, meaning that he will stay in another lake effect snow town instead.

NCAA TOURNAMENT: OUR FINAL FOURS

Mike – Texas, Pittsburgh, Connecticut and Ohio State.

Dave – Duke, UCLA, UNC and Villanova.

Wrestling state qualifiers lead winter

by the #'s

• Two wrestlers qualified for the state tournament -- junior Marcel Clapton at 135 lbs. and senior Rasheed Muhammed at 152 lbs. Clapton injured his knee in his match, resulting in a default victory for Massillon Perry's Thomas Straughn and a runner-up finish for Clapton. Muhammed qualified for states but lost in the second round.
The team finished 25th overall in the state tournament. On the season, the team posted an overall record of 4-6 and an LEL record of 3-1. They placed second in the LEL.

Dan Snider • The Shakerite

POSTING UP FOR a pass, a Shaker player looks for the ball against Solon Dec. 3. The squad lost to Euclid 74-58 in the playoffs.

•**Men's basketball**: After defeating Maple Heights 72-49 in sectional play, the Raiders lost to Euclid 74-58. Shaker improved over the course of the season, ending with a 12-8 record and in tie for third in the LEL. "In the beginning of the season, we started off slow but came together towards the end of the season," senior Harlan Fitten said. "Unfortunately, we played like individuals in the playoffs."

• **Women's basketball**: After a first round bye, the Raiders defeated Maple Heights 54-39 then lost to Cleveland JFK 60-45. While tying for second in the LEL with a 7-3 record, the Raiders finished the season with an impressive 16-6 record. "The season went well," head coach Don Readance said. "We made a lot of strides from last year and we had a young team. All five starters are returning next year."

• **Men's/women's swimming**: The men's and women's swimming team each earned LEL titles in Eric Peterson's fourth season as head coach. The women's team finished with an overall record of 6-1-1 and 5-0-1 in league play, while the men's team had an overall record of 7-1 and an undefeated record of 6-0 in the LEL.

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LOOKING FOR THE puck, junior Nate Bixenstine skates past sophomore Sam Weir who is being guarded by a University School player. The Raiders lost to Trinity 6-5 in overtime during the third round of the playoffs.

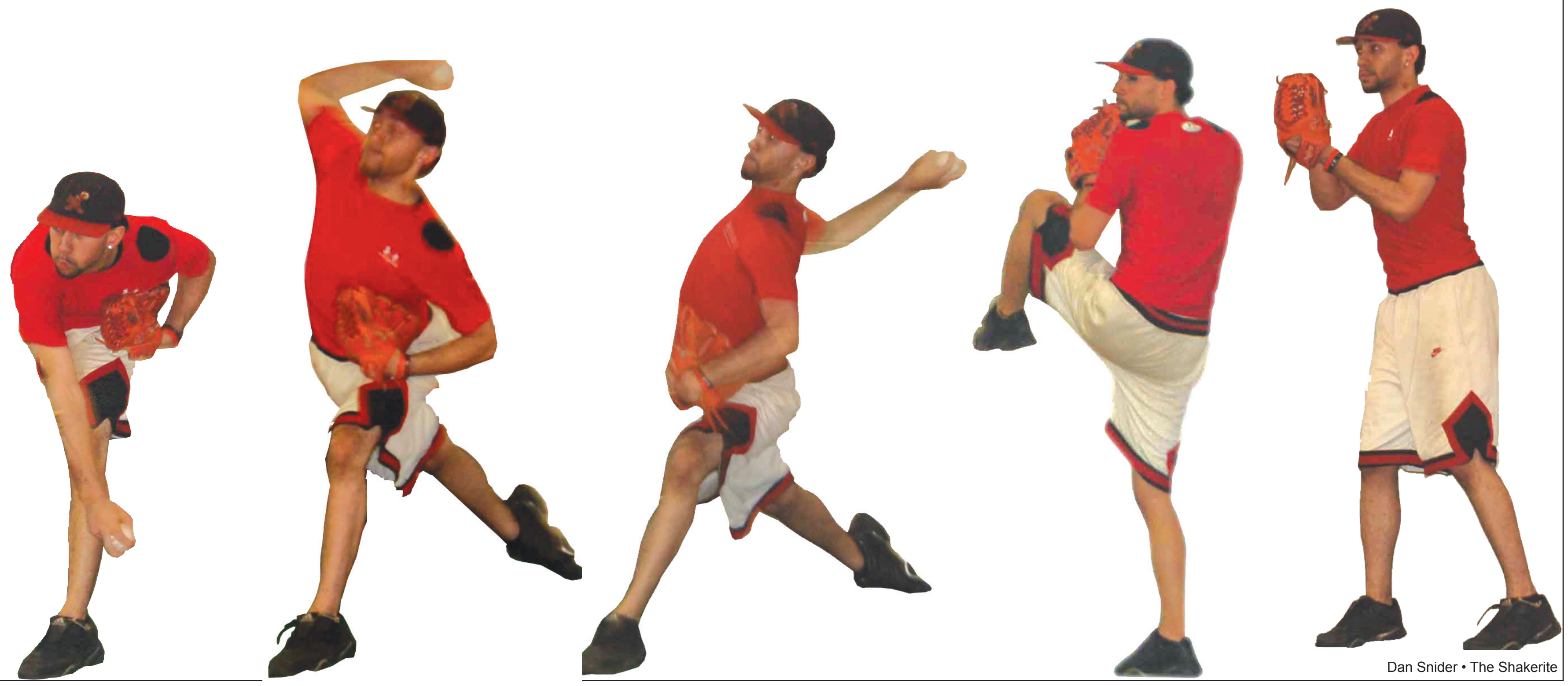
• **Hockey**: The hockey team finished the season with an 8-12-2 record, good for fifth in the Red North. Their season included many tough losses including two to their rival, University School. The Raiders lost 4-3 at home Dec. 9 to U.S. and 6-2 on the road Feb. 4.Though they ended the season losing three straight, the Raiders got off to a strong start in the playoffs by defeating West Geauga 10-0 and Brecksville 5-1. They were eliminated in overtime by a much-improved Trinity team, 6-5.

Compiled by Mike Young and David O'Connell

AND YOU THOUGHT WRESTLING WAS A MAN'S SPORT

In the mold of female athletes such as IRL driver Danica Patrick and golfers Annika Sorenstam and Michelle Wie, behold Michaela Hutchinson. Taking on the men in the 103-lb. weight class, the Anchorage Skyview High star took home the Alaskan state title. She finished the regular season 45-4 and recorded 33 pins. This is an unprecedented feat, as Hutchinson became the first girl in the nation to win a state high school wrestling title while competing against boys.

SENIOR CHAZ LEFTRIDGE demonstrates his pitching motion out of the wind up. According to Leftridge, he can hit between 88 to 92 mph on the radar gun. In addition to pitching, the right-handed Leftridge also plays shortstop.



Dan Snider • The Shakerite

AMATEUR CAREER ROUNDS THIRD, HEADS HOME

• Senior Leftridge keeps stellar high school record in perspective despite Major League dreams

BY CAITLIN NIELSEN
STAFF REPORTER

Imagine you are a four-year starter on your high school varsity baseball team. Imagine you are a right-handed pitcher who throws 88-92 mph. Imagine you are being recruited by the Pittsburgh Pirates, the Atlanta Braves and the New York Yankees.

Imagine you are Chaz Leftridge, and all of this is your reality.

Leftridge found his destiny at age 4, when his father realized he could throw a ball straight at such a young age. At 8 years old, he took the mound for the first time.

"I started pitching as soon as we were allowed," the senior said. "I've played every position, but pitcher and shortstop are my two favorite."

Leftridge now pitches and plays short for Shaker. He, along with seniors Anson Hall and Alex Math, are team captains this year.

"We plan on leading the team as far as possible this year," Leftridge said. "With the other two captains, we three will lead the team to the league championship!"

Head coach Charles "Bud" Longo said Leftridge's spirit made him a good choice for team captain. "Chaz is the undisputed leader of the team," he said. "[Math and Hall] are quiet leaders; they lead by example, but Chaz is our spiritual leader."

Leftridge's leadership style has the same effect on his co-captain, Hall. "He is a real fiery, vocal leader," Hall said. "We need that kind of leader along with those who lead by example."

On the mound last season, Leftridge, who wears uniform No. 10, racked up 74 strikeouts and posted the fourth best all-time Shaker ERA of 1.08. Leftridge also recorded nine wins, which put him into a tie with Andrew Earley ('98) for the single-season record. In addition to building on his pitching performance this spring, Leftridge wants to help the Raiders get revenge.

"We're also looking to beat Mentor, our biggest rival," Leftridge said. Last year the Raiders lost a 10-inning game to the Cardinals. Leftridge pitched all 10 innings.

Leftridge had his co-captain Hall captivated by his performance.

"It was a gutsy performance, and Chaz pitched his heart out," he said. "It was probably the best-pitched game I've seen."

Shaker heads to Mentor April 24 and will take a second crack at their LEL rival May 5 at Jacobs Field.

Dan Snider • The Shakerite

MAJOR LEAGUE PROSPECT Chaz Leftridge awaits a pitch during try-outs March 6. Leftridge has recieved letters from a number of Major League teams including the Atlanta Braves, New York Yankees and Pittsburgh Pirates.

Despite the value his coach and teammates place on his leadership, Leftridge called head coach Charles "Bud" Longo the "backbone of the team."

"The senior class has good leadership, but we developed our good sense of pride from our coach," he said.

Longo returned the compliment. "It's funny because I think Chaz is the backbone of our team," Longo said.

Leftridge molds his pitching style after his idol, Mets pitcher Pedro Martinez. "He has two Pedro gloves and wears #45 [Martinez's number] during the summer," Leftridge's father said.

The senior hurler also finds encouragement from some local heroes – his father and grandfather.

"When I need inspiration or motivation to work harder, an extra voice to push me, they are always there to give me constructive criticism," he said.

Leftridge's dad, Theodore, was an umpire and played baseball in high school and college. He tried out for the Cleveland Indians.

"The knowledge from my dad and my grandfather adds another aspect to my game; I know the game," Leftridge said.

His dad exercised good baseball judgment as Leftridge developed. "I taught him not to throw a curveball until he was 14 so he could build up his arm strength," Theodore said. "I thought the speed would come with it."

After years of instruction from his father, Leftridge has developed a repertoire of pitches. He throws a two-seam and four-seam fastball, a change-up and a slider, which Theodore calls his son's most effective pitches. Leftridge also throws a curveball and knuckleball.

"If he could effectively keep his change-up low in the zone, it would be tough to hit a fastball coming in at 90 and then a change-up coming in at 75," Theodore said.

Leftridge's pitching acumen has led him to a choice – pitch in college or enter professional baseball through the Longo thinks a professional baseball career for Leftridge is a possibility.

"We've had two guys drafted – Matt Guerrier and Andrew Earley – and Chaz throws as hard as both of them," Longo said. "His future is wide open."

When Leftridge graduates, he'll take his fastball with him, but he promises his younger siblings will step up.

"Watch out for my little brothers," he said. "And remember, don't go left to right; go right to Left[ridge]!"

Mike Young contributed to this story